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THE
LAY PREACHER.







THE
LAY PREACHER.

BY
JOSEPH DENNIE.

COLLECTED AND ARRANGED

BY
JOHN E. HALL, Esq.

COUNSELLOR AT LAW.

PHILADELPHIA:

**PUBLISHED BY HARRISON HALL,
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1817.



TO

SAMUEL EWING, Esq.

COUNSELLOR AT LAW.

MY DEAR SIR,

IN using your name, on the present occasion, without permission, I am actuated by lively emotions of personal regard, and feel well assured that you will cheerfully unite with me in an endeavour to preserve the living remains of our mutual friend. In the performance of this duty, which has justly been regarded by an imperishable writer of antiquity as one of the most important of life, and the most pleasing of friendship, I enjoy the singular satisfaction of exhibiting, in the characters of my patron and my author, brilliant examples of an elegant mind combined with purity of principle and warmth of heart.

J. E. HALL.

December 21, 1816.



TO THE READER.

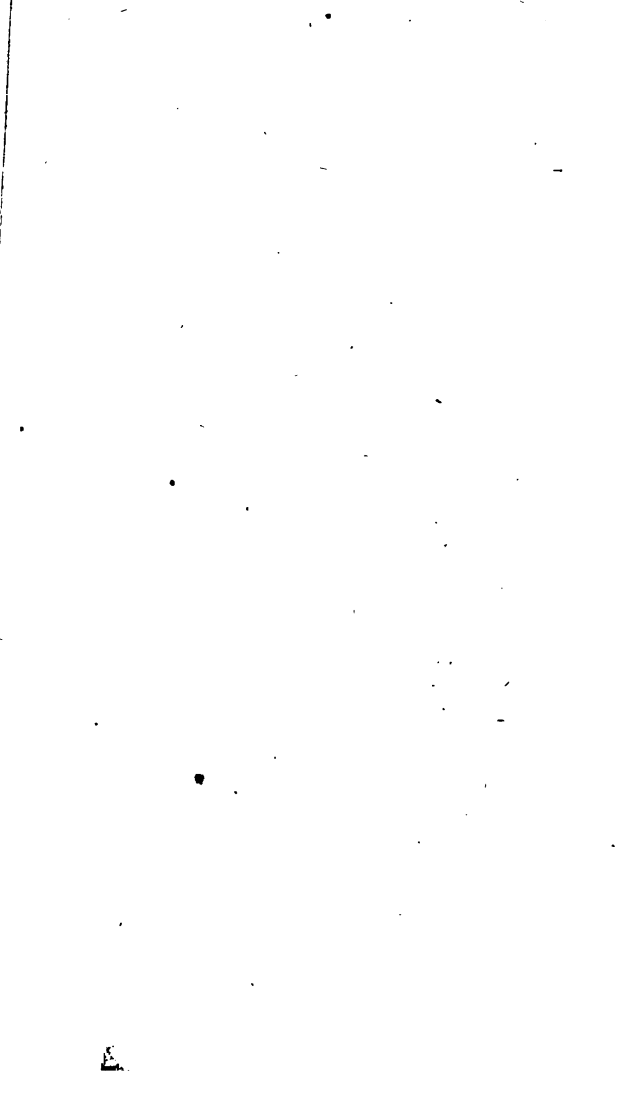
To gratify the repeated demands which have been made in the public journals, for some account of the late JOSEPH DENNIE, Esquire, and a complete edition of his writings, the editor of this volume was urged by an affectionate regard for his memory. Gratitude whispered, that the founder of the PORT FOLIO should not be forgotten by his successor; and justice, calling to mind the ornament of society, the Columbus of polite literature in this hemisphere, the zealous friend and the elegant writer, seconded the amiable suggestion. During the summer months of the present year, the editor sojourned among the friends of the deceased, that he might learn the

story of his life. He tarried in the villages, and questioned the inhabitants of the metropolis of New England. By such means he accumulated a mass of materials, which must be interesting to those who love the memory of Dennie, and are curious on the subject of domestic literature. Among other papers, his familiar and his literary correspondence alone, would form an article unusually attractive. But it is mortifying to confess, that the neglect which uniformly attends every effort in this country to vindicate the claims of "lettered worth," unless it has been blazoned in a foreign clime, urges the editor to remember the cautious conduct of Cumberland, who *tried* his *Observer* in an obscure village. In a similar spirit, dictated by that species of necessity which compels a man to consult his judgment rather than his heart, the present volume is confined to a narrow compass, and the edition is restricted to a few impressions. If it should be well received, some hazard may then be encountered. But during the rage for English books which now prevails, maugre our hatred,

malice, and uncharitableness towards that country, it would be worse than folly to offer the life and writings of an American author, to a community which purchases, with eager avidity, the most disgusting details of English profligacy,* and regards with indifference the classical beauty, the gorgeous eloquence, and the sound sense of an Ames, a Hamilton, and a Harper.

Philadelphia, 1816.

* The Editor alludes here more particularly to the rapid sale of "The Book," the "Life of Lady Hamilton," and "Glenarvon; a novel."



PREFACE.

As the title of this work may appear ludicrous to some, and be obscure to others; as many start at the word *Preacher*, and may sneer at a *Lay man*, tampering with theology—it is proper to state that this is not a volume of sermons. It is a series of essays, modelled after the designs of Addison and the harmless and playful levity of Oliver Goldsmith. The mottos are copied from the oriental writings; but they are either a moral lesson, an economical precept, or a biographical picture. The topics to which they are prefixed, are didactic, descriptive, or airy, as the gravity or the humour of the hour prompted. On the fenced, and walled, and hal-
lowed ground of religion, the author has never

presumed to trench, nor carelessly nor wantonly approach the confines of the regular clergy. The doctrine and discipline of the church are sufficiently and gloriously illuminated from many a *golden candlestick*; and the citadel of christianity is well guarded by the lynx-eyed vigilance of Bishops PORTEUS, WATSON, and HORSELEY. But a young man, sequestered and studious, imagined that the moral doctrines, and the literary beauties of the Bible might be familiarly illustrated in vehicles, cheap and popular. "*On this hint he spake*," and volunteered in a village as a *Lay Preacher*, without even "the laying on the hands of the presbytery." The author will soon respectfully appear at the bar of public opinion; and, in the impressive words of the ancient law, "stand upon his deliverance;" nothing doubting of a fair trial from the discerning, and candid, and catholic—and careless of the crude criticisms of the malignant vulgar.

THE LAY PREACHER.

DESIGN OF THE PREACHER.

"I will rise now, and go about the city, in the streets, and in the broad ways."—*Song of Solomon* iii. 2.

IN a walk, so wide, and various, the pondering *preacher*, perhaps, can moralize upon the shifting scenes, more profitably, aye, and men pleasantly too, than a more heedless pedestrian. He, who sallies out for the express purpose of speculation and remark, with his scrutinizing spectacles on, and "with a patient ear," can note and describe, with greater accuracy, than the individual, who is cramped with the crowd, or who, engrossed by some worldly care, is hurrying onward to his object.

Scotch edition I used to twirl over, in the country. Though the tithes of a Lay Preacher, are very tardily collected, yet, the more liberal parishioner, does not always forget, that "the labourer is worthy of his hire." Cheerfulness keeps pace with patronage, and, though there is not much danger, that she will be outstripped by her companion, I have such good spirits, and such agreeable reveries, in my "journeyings," whether from country to town, or, "from Dan to Beersheba," that I often flatter myself I shall,

"From diocese to diocese, to CANTERBURY pass, sir."

But, enough of this levity. It remains, to speak of the profit, or the pleasure, which I propose to my readers, from my habit of *going about the city*. If, either as a watchman, or a loungeur, I traverse its *streets*, or its *broad ways*, the utility of such a ramble need not long be doubted. It will enable me, to variegate my speculations, to discern all the hues of "many coloured life," to turn gay subjects to moral purposes, and furnish copious materials for rebuke, or exhortation.

On the decisive authority of the sagacious author of the text, we are told, that wisdom crieth without, and uttereth her voice in the streets; in the chief place of concourse, in the openings of the gates; in the city. We are repeatedly assured, by one, who perfectly knew all her haunts, that she standeth in the top of high places, by the way, in the places of the paths; at the entry of the city, and, at the coming in at the doors. Now, if such places be her chief resort, it is, surely, laudable to look for her there, to *go about*, and strive to meet her, and persuade others to be companions in such a stroll. This is an invincible argument in support of the proposition; and, if my readers, in their pride of logic, talk of sophisms and fallacy, they, virtually, vote the words of the wise, foolish; and Solomon himself, a simpleton!

ON THE PLEASURES OF STUDY.

“Blessed is he that readeth.”—*Rev. i. 1.*

WHENEVER I reflect upon my habitual attachment to books, I feel a new glow of gratitude towards that Power, who gave me a mind thus disposed, and to those liberal friends, who have allowed the utmost latitude of indulgence to my propensity. Had I been born on a barbarous shore, denied the glorious privileges of education, and interdicted an approach to the rich provinces of literature, I should have been the most miserable of mankind. With a temperament of sensibility, with the nerves of a valetudinarian, with an ardent thirst for knowledge, and very scanty means for its acquisition, with a mind often clouded with care, and depressed by dejection, I should have resembled the shrinking vegetable of irritableness, and like the mimosa of the gardens, have been doomed

to be at once stupid and sensitive. The courses of nature and fortune having taken a different direction, parental benignity having furnished me with the keys, and discipline and habit having conducted me through the portico of education, I have ever found, whether walking in the vestibule of science, or meditating in the groves of philosophy, or hearkening to historians and poets, or rambling with Rabelais, such excellent companions, that life has been beguiled of more than half its irksomeness. In sickness, in sorrow, in the most doleful days of dejection, or in the most gloomy seasons in the calendar, study is the sweetest solace and the surest refuge, particularly when my reading is directed to that immortal book, whence the theme of this essay is taken. In an hour of adversity, when I have caught up this precious volume, I have found, instantly, the balm of Gilead and the medicine for the mind. The darkness of despair has been succeeded by the brightest rays of cheerfulness, and in place of grim phantoms, I have found comfort, peace, and serenity.

I hope that this style of speaking occasionally in the first person will be forgiven, even by the most fastidious reader, when he adverts to

the custom of my predecessors. A periodical writer can hardly avoid this sort of egotism, and it is surely very harmless, when its employer muffles himself in the mantle of concealment, and in the guise, whether of a shrewd *Spectator* or a simple *Lay Preacher*, walks unobtrusively abroad. Mr. Addison and Monsieur Montaigne perpetually indulge this habit; and on a very careful inspection of many editions of their essays, I have always found, by certain infallible marks, that those speculations had been most diligently perused, which abound in little sketches of the manners, humours; and habits of their authors. We are naturally curious thus to peep through the keyhole of a study, to see a writer in his elbow-chair, and to listen to his story with the fondness and familiarity of friendship. Anonymous authors have a prescription from Parnassus to paint themselves; and when by a *Tatler*, a *Spectator*, or a *Connoisseur*, nothing but good colours and modest tinting is employed, men look with mingled curiosity and complacency at the picture. In a speculation on the blessings derived from a studious temper, if a miniature of a lover of books is introduced, provided it be a tolerable resem-

blance, and viewed in a proper light, it will, by an easy association, lead the observer to reflect more intensely upon the value of literature.

The utility and delight of a taste for books are as demonstrable as any axiom of the severest science. The most prosperous fortune is often harassed by various vexations. The sturdiest son of strength is sometimes the victim of disease. Melancholy will sometimes involve the merriest in her shade, and the fairest month of the year will have its cloudy days. In these dreary seasons, from which no man may hope to escape, sensual delights will ~~not~~ fill scarcely a nook in the gloomy void of the troubled time. Brief as the lightning in the collied night, this sort of pleasure may flash before the giddy eyes, but then merely for a moment, and the twinkling radiance is still surrounded with the murkiest gloom. Eating, drinking, and sleeping; the song and the dance, the tabret and viol, the hurry of dissipation, the agitation of play, these resources, however husbanded, are inadequate to the claims of life. On the other hand, the studious and contemplative man has always a scheme of wisdom by which he can either endure or forget the sorrows of

the heaviest day. Though he may be cursed with care, yet he is surely blessed when he readeth. Study is the *dulce lenimen laborum* of the Sabine bard. It is sorrow's sweet assuager. By the aid of a book, he can transport himself to the vale of Tempe, or the gardens of Armida. He may visit Pliny at his villa, or Pope at Twickenham. He may meet Plato on the banks of Illyssus, or Petrarch among the groves of Avignon. He may make philosophical experiments with Bacon, or enjoy the eloquence of Bolingbroke. He may speculate with Addison, moralize with Johnson, read tragedies and comedies with Shakspeare, and be raptured by the rhetoric of Burke.

In many of the old romances, we are gravely informed, that the unfortunate knight in the dungeon of some giant, or fascinated by some witch or enchanter, while he sees nothing but hideousness and horror before him, if haply a fairy, or some other benignant being, impart a talisman of wondrous virtue, on a sudden our disconsolate prisoner finds himself in a magnificent palace, or a beautiful garden, in the bower of beauty, or in the arms of love. This wild fable, which abounds in the legends of

knight-errantry, has always appeared to me very finely to shadow out the enchantment of study. A book produces a delightful abstraction from the cares and sorrows of this world. They may press upon us, but when we are engrossed by study we do not very acutely feel them. Nay, by the magic illusion of a fascinating author, we are transported from the couch of anguish, or the gripe of indigence, to Milton's paradise, or the elysium of Virgil.

ON MEDITATION.

“Commune with your own heart upon your bed, and be still.”—*Psalms* iv. 4.

HAVING, in my last speculation, attempted to describe some of the delights of study, in this paper it is proposed to consider the true use of retirement. Between them there should be a perpetual alliance; nay, they are not only neighbouring and friendly powers, but they are familiar connexions. Amiable, interesting, and lovely sisters! if your worthy admirer be attracted by the riches of one, he will quickly be delighted with the pensiveness of the other. Study will give him all her books, and retirement conduct him to all her bowers. In no ramble, will he experience more delight than when he roves through the healthful wood, or saunters through the tranquil cloister, with re-

turement on his right hand, and study on his left. Though their guise is exceedingly modest, though their conversation has no resemblance to loquacity, though their best attire is from no other wardrobe than that of sweet simplicity, still they will always gain more regard from the wiser, than all the pageants of the pompous, and all the plumage of the vain.

The royal psalmist, from whose divine odes, I have transcribed my text, was himself a memorable example of the utility of retirement, reflection, and self-communion. It will be remembered, that he was a warrior, a statesman, a man of business, and a man of the world. In these various characters, though he often acquitted himself excellently well, yet unfortunately, in some flagrant instances, we perceive how much he was tainted by the infection of the world. But when he shuts his eyes against the glare of ambition, and the gaze of beauty, when he ceases to touch the harp of fascination, and forsakes the cabinet and the camp, then we recognize, at once, the scholar, the philosopher, and the poet. In the strong holds at En-gedi, he is a mere soldier; in the palace of Saul, a servile musician; in the cave of Adul-

lam, a skulking fugitive; and in the forest of Hareth, an unhappy exile. But when he tore himself away from the thralldom of care, the bustle of business, and the din of Jerusalem, when he wandered away by *the brook of the field*, or the *plains of the wilderness*, when he retired to his chamber, and communed with his heart, then he formed those noble associations, and composed those exquisite performances, which will transmit his name with renown to the remotest posterity.

My lord Bacon, sir Walter Raleigh, Erasmus, Grotius, Mr. Addison, and Mr. Locke, together with a great multitude of illustrious men, have been deeply involved in the cares of public business, as well as engrossed by the meditations of the closet. But for the fairest portion of their glorious fame, how much are they indebted to the latter! While the chancery decrees of sir Francis Bacon moulder away in the hands of some master of the rolls, the experiments of his study, and the *essays* of his wit, like certain exquisite paintings, grow brighter by time. While we peruse, with still renewing pleasure, Raleigh's history of the world, his unlucky politics are scarcely regar-

ded. Mr. Addison was secretary of state, and Grotius an ambassador; but who inquires for the despatches of the one, or is interested by the negotiations of the other? The fame of Erasmus, constantly immersed in the turmoil of his times, and engrossed by cares, civil and ecclesiastic, would have perished with the names of those miserable monks, whom he has derided, or those imperious princes, whom he has courted. But by sometimes wisely withdrawing himself from the cabals of a court, and the polemics of the church, by meditating on horseback, and in his chamber, by avarice of time, by intensesness of application, and ardour of genius, he has filled *ten folios*, composed in the purest Latinity, where an indolent reader can find nothing too prolix, and where a critical reader can discover nothing to reprehend. The foolish politics of Addison are scarcely remembered, even by his faction. The character of Locke, as a man of business, is painted with no other pencils than those of ridicule, and the diplomacy of Grotius, and of sir William Temple are *utterly contemned*; but their literary and philosophical works, the beauteous offspring of retirement and study, will continue to charm,

'Till Time, like him of Gaza, in his wrath,
Plucking the pillars that support the world,
In nature's ample ruins lies entombed,
And midnight, universal midnight! reigns.

Though in the text we are admonished to commune with ourselves, in our *chamber*, yet it would be a very partial and narrow interpretation, if it were concluded that we could not meditate any where else. The secrecy of a closet, and the stillness of midnight, are, unquestionably, propitious to the powers of reflection. But other places and other seasons may be selected for that salutary discipline, which the Psalmist recommends. It is a vulgar error to suppose, that retirement and contemplation are never to be found, except in a forest or a desert, a cell or a cloister. In the thronged mart, and in the blaze of day, he who has inured himself to habits of abstraction, may commune with himself, as though he was in his chamber. Proofs of this abound in many a page of the records of literature. Some of the fairest displays of self-knowledge, some of the finest results of meditation, some of the sweetest fruits of retirement owed their appearance not to the tranquillity of sylvan groves. In

many a metropolis, resounding with the din of commerce, and crowded with the throng of nations, *contemplation has had her fill*. Though a sublime poet, in a fit of rural enthusiasm, has exclaimed,

Hide me from *day's* garish eye,

yet it would be alike dangerous and delusive to believe, that we cannot speculate at noon, as well as at night. In short, the choice of time or place is not essential, to the formation of habits of *self-sequestration*, and the acquisition of the precious power of withdrawing the mind from all external objects.

As, in Dr. Johnson's phrase, I am often *wakefully disturbed*, at midnight, and as I have not wholly forgotten my boyish attachment to woods and meadows, I acknowledge that I often commune with myself, in my chamber; and, in genial seasons, by the banks of a romantic river, or in the recesses of a lonely forest. I have already speculated twice on the profit and pleasure producible by nocturnal hours, wisely employed, and rural rambles, judiciously directed. But for a period of no inconsiderable duration, I have often retired to rest at a vulgar

hour, and have wholly exchanged the country for the city. Change of circumstances demanded new habits. Though but seldom I *wind slowly o'er the lea*; though the glimmering *landscape* but rarely fades before my sight; and my ears generally listen to other sounds than the *drowsy tinklings* of a shepherd's bell, yet it is my duty to reflect much, even in the midst of confusion. Accordingly, I commune with my own heart, in the crowd, and can be still, even in the street. I sermonize, in the suburbs, and find apt alliteration in an alley. I start a topic in High-street, and hunt it down as far as Southwark, or the Northern Liberties. I walk through the market place, as I once wandered in a wood; and while one is talking of his farm, and another of his merchandize, I listen to the suggestions of fancy, or invoke the cherub contemplation.

But, to return to a more rigorous exposition of the text, and consider it merely as an exhortation to the tranquil exercise of our mental powers, in the retirement of the closet, I do not know whether in the pages of any philosopher, I could find a better lesson of salutary discipline. It is favourable to the culture of intel-

lectual, as well as moral habits. He, who accustoms himself to closet meditations, will not only purify his heart, but correct his judgment, form his taste, exercise his memory, and regulate his imagination. Moreover, he then has an admirable opportunity to view the world, at a due distance, to form a deliberate estimate of life, to calculate, with precision, the proportion of his own powers, combined with those of other men; and having weighed himself, as it were, in the "balance of the sanctuary," to find new causes for regret, and new reasons for reformation.

To multitudes, solitude, retirement, and reflection, appear in a form more horrid than the *weird sisters* in Shakspeare. The man of business, the man of pleasure, the votary of vanity, and the victim of lassitude, all sedulously shun those hours, which have been so nobly employed by philosophers, poets, hermits, and saints. Dr. Young, who has immortalized his self-communion, in one of the most original poems in our language, a poem not only of gorgeous metaphors, but of the most ardent piety, exclaims, with more than mortal enthusiasm,

Oh, lost to virtue, lost to manly thought,
Lost to *the noblest sallies of the soul!*
Who think it solitude *to be alone,*
Communion sweet! communion large and high!
Our reason, guardian angel, and our God!

ON PROSPERITY AND ADVERSITY.

“ Also the Lord gave Job twice as much as he had before. Then came there unto him all his brethren, and all his sisters, and all they that had been of his acquaintance before, and did eat bread with him in his house: and they bemoaned him, and comforted him over all the evil that the Lord had brought upon him: every man also gave him a piece of money, and every one an ear-ring of gold.”

Job xiii. 10, 11.

Of all the dramatic poems, with which readers of taste and sensibility have been delighted and instructed, the book of Job is unquestionably the most pathetic, sublime, and beautiful. The dialogue is in the noblest style of composition, and the interlocutors are all remarkable for character, manners, and sentiment. The fable is extremely artful and well supported, and the moral such as must challenge the approbation of every virtuous mind. He who is habitually negligent of his bible, or indifferent to

charms of the Oriental muse, will hardly be persuaded, that the book of Job abounds with entertainment as well as instruction. But the fact is indisputable, and the politest scholars and the most rigorous critics have dwelt with rapture, which they felt, upon the beauties of this incomparable performance.

The personage, whose name gives a title to the work, is represented as an eastern nobleman of consummate wisdom, ardent piety, and unbounded wealth. He is neither insolent in prosperity, nor abject in adversity. His character is emphatically described as *perfect*. Studious of the divine favour, and blind to all the blandishments of vice, he walked so uprightly in a noble and undeviating course of rectitude, that he was universally regarded as the standard of integrity. He was perfectly pure from every taint of avarice, voluptuousness, hypocrisy, vanity, and ambition. He is neither ostentatious, envious, nor revengeful. His hospitality was princely, his justice exemplary, and his charities innumerable. He is a tender parent, a generous master, a constant friend, and a benevolent man. He was a father to the poor, the champion of the oppressed, the advocate of innocence,

the guardian of orphans, and a physician to the lame and blind. In short, to use his own brilliant and energetic expressions, he put on righteousness and it clothed him. His judgment was as a robe and a diadem. He caused the widow's heart to sing for joy, and the poor man was warmed with the fleece of his sheep.

But neither a prosperous fortune, nor a magnificent expenditure, nor a blameless life, is a sure protection against the vicissitudes of nature, the ravages of disease, or the visitation of melancholy. While Job was thus basking in the meridian of happiness, while he enjoyed favour with God, and popularity among men; while his palaces glittered with the gold of Ophir, the precious onyx, and the sapphire; coral and pearls, the ruddiest of rubies, and the topaz of Ethiopia, a terrible visitation is impending. The genius of misfortune appears before his distracted eyes in the most horrible form that *fables yet have feigned, or fear conceived*. In one hour, his wealth vanished, his servants were slain, and his children consumed. To add to this gloomy catalogue of woes, his body is not only tormented with the scourge of sickness, but

his mind is clouded with all the darkness of despair.

In this mournful reverse of circumstances, one who took but a hasty glance at human nature, and who partially looked only at one side, would naturally conclude, that Job would be immediately surrounded by crowds, impatient to testify their opinion of his value, and their sorrow and solace for his suffering. As he was a man of genius, wisdom, and eloquence; as he had been a character of so much distinction, that he was the companion of princes, and the oracle of the people; as he was a nobleman, a judge, an orator, and a statesman, he had the strongest claim upon the gratitude of some, the friendship of others, and the compassion of all. Let us now count this army of auxiliaries coming to the support of suffering virtue. We shall not laboriously task our arithmetic. Of that swarm, which once buzzed in his courts, and hovered in his palaces, who quaffed the richest of his wines, and anointed themselves in rivers of his oil, only *three* individuals remain, and this scanty group, so far from pouring balm on his tortured mind, assail him in the angriest terms of reproach and con-

troversy; and, in a spirit of captious sophistry, which would disgrace the most illiberal of mankind, cavil at every chapter of his life. Instead of being run after by admiring thousands, instead of witnessing a multitude banqueting at his table, instead of being surrounded with obsequious guests, and fawning dependents, he finds himself on a sudden in the dismal company of solitude and contempt. The same gust of adversity, which had made a wreck of his fortune and his peace, had blown away all his friends, connexions and companions too, and on a raging ocean he finds himself joyless, and alone, and on the very gulf of despair.

Like April skies, life is coquetish, capricious, and changeable. Prosperity and adversity often succeed each other, like the vicissitudes of day and night. The unhappy sufferer, whom we have just left in an abyss of misfortunes, suddenly emerges, by the favour of Divine Providence, and his last days are fairer than the first. Having exercised a patience unparalleled, and displayed a *conscience void of offence*, his integrity is justly and graciously requited by a most magnificent reward. His fortune was doubled, and his family favoured. Honours and gifts

await him. But is it necessary for me to record, with the minuteness of an annalist, this *second* epoch in this good man's history? Is it not already indicated, as it were with a pen of diamond, by the circumstance in the text? Is it not clear, as noontide beams, that our patient hero must have gained his rank in society, and become "a prosperous gentleman," before his brethren and his sisters, and all they that had been of his acquaintance *before*, would come and eat bread with him, and bemoan him and comfort him? During the gloomy season of his sufferings, we do not hear one syllable of these sunshine friends. Lover and friend were not put far away, but kept far away. No brother nor sister, nor old acquaintance, nor grateful friend, nor pampered guest, nor faithful servant, ever dreamed of visiting Job in poverty and affliction. Suddenly fortune smiles, and who then more smiling than the servile and parasitical followers of Fortune? The indigent Job is alone, the affluent Job is overwhelmed with the civilities of crowds. Not only his family friends and domestic retainers are officious in their visits, but every man gave him a piece of

money, and every one an ear-ring of gold. As Jaques in the play finely remarks,

—They made a testament
As worldlings do, giving their sum of more
To that, which had too much——

There was a time, when Job *sat down among the ashes*, that, so far from receiving money gratuitously, he could not have borrowed a piece of silver, no not on usury. But when his coffers and caskets are once more replenished, all the gold of the Orientals is showered upon him.

Having incidently alluded to a passage in the immortal Shakspeare, I cannot refrain from recommending to my classical readers, the perusal, in connexion with my text, of that admirable drama, *Timon of Athens*. The story of this prodigal nobleman, compared with that of the patient Job, deserted by his friends, at his utmost need, and courted by them, during a reverse of fortune, will present such a picture of human nature, as neither Hobbes nor Mandeville would hope to emulate with the hardest pencils and the darkest colouring.

PAUL'S VOYAGE TO ROME.

"Now, when much time was spent, and when sailing was now dangerous, Paul admonished them, and said unto them, Sirs, I perceive that this voyage will be with hurt and much damage, not only of the lading and ship, but also of our lives. Nevertheless, the centurion believed the master and the owner of the ship, more than those things, which were spoken by Paul."—*Acts xvii. 9, 10, 11.*

THIS affectionate admonition so modestly, so courteously, so benignantly expressed, claimed and deserved all the centurion's regard. But this appeal, both to the reason and the passions of a Roman soldier was ineffectual. The warning voice of sagacity, the counsel of prudence, and even the silver tones of eloquence itself, neither convinced nor persuaded vulgar obstinacy. Why? "Because the centurion *believed the master and the owner of the ship, more than those things, which were spoken by Paul.*"

The genius of foreknowledge herself personified by an apostle, rears her aspiring form on the Cretan strand, and darts her eyes of keenness across the Adriatic gulf. She sees, in the gloomy distance, every image of night, and tempest, and terror; she sees the shattered mast, and hears the howl of the tempest, and the shrieks of the mariner. She exclaims in her most friendly voice to the centurion and his companions: Beware, my Julius, beware my brethren, weigh not anchor, winter at Crete, unfurl no sail, till genial spring time come, and south winds softly blow.)

Is it possible that men will not listen to such a monitor? Is the *deaf adder* always an emblem of human perverseness, which will not hearken to the voice of the charmer, charming ever so wisely? Yes, it seems to be a characteristic of our nature, often to treat with contemptuous neglect, advice the most salutary, and prophesying the most authentic, and to rush with desperate zeal, hoodwinked, to perdition.

But I shall not detain my readers with moralizing, which they may think dulness, when it is in my power to describe a voyage, which I am sure they will pronounce entertaining.

To understand the full import of Paul's caution against the centurion's carelessness, and the sinister consequences, which followed from the latter, let us look into the last chapter of the Acts. It is short, but it is exceedingly copious of amusement and instruction.

In consequence of the zeal of St. Paul, in defence of the christian faith, he is accused, tried, and condemned before a provincial tribunal. He appeals, and is ordered to embark for Rome. This voyage to Italy commences with every evil omen. The accused apostle first enters into a ship of Adramyttium. But the winds are contrary. After being tossed about, and crossing two seas, the desired haven is still at a distance, and at Myra, an Alexandrian vessel receives our illustrious wanderer. Here again navigation is checked. Some torpedo seems to cling to the keel. The winds will not suffer the ship to pursue her course. *They sailed slowly many days.* Their lagging progress is finely described, by almost every word in the context. The line labours almost as much as the ship. They could hardly pass one of the petty islands in the Mediterranean. They have not yet lost sight of Candia. Meanwhile, autumn advances. Much

time has been lost, and though the halcyon now sits brooding on the unruffled wave, yet winter and tempest and trouble are at hand. The deceitful tranquillity of the sea and sky did not delude Paul. He needed no almanac to foretell him of the foul weather, which approached, nor took an observation, except by the glass of experience and sagacity. He discerned mischief at the very verge of the horizon, in *the little cloud no bigger than a man's hand*. He told his fellow passengers plainly, that the voyage would prove perilous, not merely to the vessel and cargo, but to themselves. He doubtless enforced his admonition with all the arguments, which his dexterous logic could so adroitly employ, and all that blandishment, which his graceful elocution could lavish. In short, he appealed directly not only to their good sense, but to their interest, and to their fears. If wisdom, authority, genius, learning, insinuating manners, and versatile talents were ever combined in one man, and all employed for the benefit of his fellow-men, it was on this occasion. Julius, the centurion, in whose custody St. Paul is detained, had just witnessed the astonishing powers of the apostle, in the course of his ardu-

ous trial before king Agrippa, and the captious Festus; before a Jewish viceroy, and a Roman procurator, both of them his mortal enemies. On this interesting occasion, the apostle displayed so much eloquence, assisted by all the powers of reason, innocence, truth, and nature, that even his austerer judge, relenting, is almost won over to christianity, and both Agrippa and Festus, with a harmony that does them honour, agree that this fascinating man deserved neither death nor disgrace; that he might have been liberated, had he not appealed to a higher tribunal. The centurion was so forcibly struck with the generous qualities of this great man's mind, that though he held him as a prisoner, he treated him with the utmost humanity, and, on their arrival at Sidon, he had so much confidence in his honour and integrity, and so much compassion for his misfortunes, that, as it is beautifully expressed in the original, Julius courteously entreated Paul, and gave him liberty to go unto his friends to refresh himself. Yet with all these favourable impressions, this polite, and gentle, and generous soldier, like too many men of the world, was swayed by ignorant, mechanical, and mercenary people, and trusted

vulgar credulity rather than philosophic genius. Although he had such recent experience of the abilities of the apostle, *nevertheless*—I am ashamed to add the miserable and disgraceful conclusion,—nevertheless, the centurion believed the master and the owner of the ship, more than those things, which were spoken by Paul. A venal owner of the cargo and an ignorant mariner, who, as it appears had scarcely a chart to steer by, put to silence even the tongue of the apostle. Thus does the “learned pate duck to the golden fool,” thus, in common life, is the honourable merchant supplanted by the vulgar pedler, thus, is the scholar often defeated by the dunce, and thus does the long-eared ass of drudgery sometimes gain more attention than the fleetest zebra, that ever bounded over the hills. The pilot and the owner easily persuade the credulous centurion. The *crew* too, always restless and fond of change, are eager to depart. Because, in their absurd opinion, the fair haven, where they were at anchor in safety, was not perfectly commodious to winter in, “the more part advised to depart thence, if, by any means they might attain to Phenice.” These mad mariners consulted nothing but their own im-

patient humour, listened to nothing, but to that deceitful breeze, which is courted to waft them to some *other port*; and, when the south wind blew softly, supposing that they had obtained their purpose, with all the credulity of foolishness, and all the rashness of desperation they set sail, in defiance of Paul and of prudence herself.

Let us mark the consequences of so romantic an adventure, instigated by the *voice of the people*, and pursued by an opinionated owner, a fool-hardy pilot, and a crew of madcap mariners, who, probably, with all the plausibility of pert pretension, talked to the goodnatured centurion about tides and currents, as though inspired by the very genius of the sea.

But not long after there arose a tempestuous wind, called Euroclydon; and now we shall have a fine specimen of the skill of these self-willed sailors. They are in the utmost confusion and consternation. They abandon the vessel to the mercy of the storm. She reels to and fro, with a motion more giddy than that of the drunkards who have thus exposed her. The description is so emphatical and picturesque in the original, that it merits transcription. "And when the ship *was*

caught, and could not bear up into the wind, we let her drive. And running under a certain island, which is called Clauda, we had much work to come by the boat, which, when they had taken up, they used helps, undergirding the ship; and, fearing lest they should fall into the quicksands, strake sail, and so were driven. And we being exceedingly tossed with the tempest, the next day they lightened the ship, and the third day we cast out with our own hands the tackling. And when neither sun nor stars in many days appeared, and no small tempest lay on us, all hope that we should be saved was then taken away."

Virgil's description of a storm in the first book of an epic poem, which is the boast of ages, and the darling of criticism, may be more elaborate, yet is not more affecting than the above narrative.

But the misfortunes of these miserable mariners are by no means at an end. During the space of a fortnight, a most tremendous interval, the storm rages with unmitigated wrath. They are buffeted by all the billows of the Adriatic sea. At starless midnight, dreading the peril of hidden rocks, they cast four ~~anchors~~

strating saint, and the rebellious crew. One natural inference shall now be drawn, which may be considered as the moral of this essay.

In every country, in every age, how often has this despicable farce of human perverseness been exhibited! How obstinately do men shut their eyes against the radiance of reason, and stop their ears, to exclude the voice of truth!

In seasons of political peril, for example, how often has a sagacious statesman, whose wisdom and prescience have been tried, as it were, in a balance, and uniformly stood the test of an unerring standard, cautioned in vain, both the officer and the mariner not to embark madly in the crazy ship, Desperation. Some narrow calculation, some short-sighted policy, some giddy humour has predominated over experience, prudence, and genius. Men rush to their ruin. The Euroclydon rises. The bleak northeast of adversity howls in every ear. The fatal levanter sweeps the sea and the sky. The "fountains of the great deep are broken up," and our bark and the crew are dashed on the quicksands of destruction.

STORY OF SAMUEL.

“Moreover his mother made him a little coat, and brought it to him from year to year.”—1 *Sam.* xi. 19.

IN the initial book of the kings of Israel, which, as it records, in a very noble style, some of the most memorable events in Jewish history, deserves the profoundest attention, perhaps there is nothing more pleasing and instructive than the biography of the prophet Samuel. A circumstance, apparently trivial, which occurred in his infancy, will form the subject of our present speculation.

We deliberately adopt the phrase “apparently trivial,” because the circumstance in question, though it might not be noticed by the quick glance of hasty observation, led to the most important results, and contributed to the formation

of one of the most splendid characters ever portrayed by the historian.

Descended from respectable ancestors from Mount Ephraim, his father, who appears to be a tender husband, an affectionate parent, and a truly religious man, was in the habit, as might be naturally expected from so exemplary a character, of migrating annually, from the solitude of Mount Ephraim to the city of Shiloh. But the journey was not undertaken from the ordinary motives of curiosity, restlessness, indolence, or pleasure. He did not forsake his rural retreat to gaze at the magnificence of a metropolis, or to hearken to the "hum of men." No: the object of the journey was of a more noble nature, and worthy of the pious pilgrim. *He went up out of the city yearly to worship and to sacrifice in Shiloh; and to adore, in the Jewish temple, the Great Parent of the Universe.*

Nor was his devotion of the sullen and monastic kind. There was nothing selfish, melancholy, or austere, in his religious service. His family accompanied him, and kneeled at the same altar. Hannah, his beloved consort, was so struck with the solemnity of the temple, and the beauty of holiness, her heart was so

softened by the spirit of piety, and her head so convinced of the propriety of her plan, that, in an hour of melancholy, yet sober enthusiasm, she resolved to dedicate her first born son to the church. In the simplicity of the Hebrew idiom, she *vowed a vow* that she would give him to the Lord all the days of his life. This good resolution did not evaporate in the idle words of a fanatic visionary. It was not the mere babble of a superstitious crone, who mistakes the heat of the heart, and the giddiness of the head for the emotions of rational zeal. The determination to dedicate her son to the priesthood was worthy of a discreet and amiable woman, who probably saw, with the keen eyes of sagacity, assisted by the light of prescience, that Samuel would prove a personage, eminent for his rank and piety; that he would dictate the operations of a campaign, and preside at the deliberations of a cabinet; that he would predict the fate of empires, and assist at the coronation of kings; that his warning voice would restrain the madness of the people, and his pious orisons ascend to the heaven of his God.

All this was gloriously accomplished. While yet a child, he was distinguished by the parti-

cular partiality of Providence. He was endowed with the gift of prophecy, and invested with the robes of religion. Though devoted to the service of God, he acquired popularity among men. During an important era in his life, he was judge of south and west Israel, and afterwards of the other quarters. This viceroyalty included a power nearly absolute. With the *voice potential* of sovereign authority, he could exclaim unto the north, give up, and to the south, keep not back; bring thy sons from afar, and thy daughters from the ends of the earth. He was scarcely weaned, before we find him ministering in the Jewish tabernacle, and superseding in religious ceremonies and offices the elder priesthood. In the maturity of manhood, he administers justice, guards the purity of the national worship, and promotes the peace and dignity of government. He concludes famous treaties. He erects magnificent altars. Such was the splendour of his reputation, and such the opinion of his discernment, that the stranger Benjamite, who lived in remote obscurity, far from the scene of Samuel's glories, describes him as an **HONOURABLE MAN**, and adds, what every page in Samuel's history proves, that *all that he*

saith cometh to pass. He is saluted with the sacred title of seer, and even the *ungovernable populace*, awed by his abilities and sanctity, will not eat in the high place of the city, until he bless the sacrifice. He pours the oil of honour and gladness on the head of a sovereign, and then, with all the skill of a statesman, and all the power of a premier, dictates the course of regal polity. Though almost perpetually conversant with courts, he is pure from their corruption. He is a faithful servant to his prince, but, he is also a vigilant guardian and an honest monitor. While others flatter, he rebukes Saul; and although his sovereign was of a moody, sullen, and untractable spirit, yet Samuel never shrinks, when it was necessary to adopt either the ardour of expostulation, or the acerbity of censure. Though he *thought as a sage*, when he reflected upon the vices and follies of this monarch, yet *he felt like a man*, when he deplored their consequences. Obligated to estrange himself from his infatuated sovereign, he still cherished a sort of paternal solicitude for his welfare; and when the gloomy king, in a fit of capricious disgust, *went up to his house*, and the prophet *came no more to see him until the day of his death*, never-

theless, as it is expressed with equal artlessness and affection in the sacred history, nevertheless Samuel mourned for Saul. In the decline of life, when most men, satiated with worldly grandeur, slide carelessly down the slippery descent of age, this consistent and illustrious character is erect, and guarded to the last. Conscious of his spotless integrity, and of his fervid zeal in the public service, he challenges a justification of his integrity, in one of the noblest, most rhetorical, and pathetic passages that can be found in the pleadings of any orator, in any age. He said *unto all Israel*, "Behold I have hearkened unto your voice, and have made a king over you. And now behold the king walketh before you: and I am old and gray headed, and behold my sons are with you; and I have walked before you from my childhood unto this day. Behold here I am: witness against me before the Lord, and before his anointed: whose ox have I taken? or whose ass have I stolen? or, whom have I defrauded? Whom have I oppressed? or of whose hand have I received any bribe, to blind mine eyes therewith? And I will restore it you." And they said "Thou hast not defrauded us, nor oppressed us, neither hast thou taken

aught of any man's hand." "The Lord is witness against you, and his anointed is witness, that ye have not found aught in my hand." And they answered, "He is witness."

This is the *finis coronat opus*; this is leaving life's bustling scene, with such excellent companions as honour, spirit, and dignity. The circumstances of this transaction give it a peculiar effect. It was a *provoco ad populum*. It was an appeal to the *populace*, to the mutable, miscellaneous, ungrateful, and ignorant *rabble*. It was, moreover, not only to a *mob*, but to a Jewish mob, than which the herd of swine, of whom the devil himself once had the absolute possession, does not exhibit a stronger picture of baseness, wildness, perverseness, and desperation. But even before so rash and stupid a tribunal, the manly voice of innocence, with dignity and integrity in her train, commanded silence, and won applause; and what renders more signal this triumph of genius, virtue and rank, is, that it was obtained at the very moment, when the intrepid prophet and indignant sage was reproving the herd for their ingratitude, obstinacy, and rebellion.

Having thus abridged the history of this great and good man, as concisely as the nature and multitude of his illustrious actions would allow, we will now look back to the text, from which the *vulgar* critic may think we have strayed, but which the reader of sensibility will soon perceive has always been the *radiant point* of our speculation.

One eventful year in the life of Elkanah, the father of Samuel, he *and all his house went up to offer the yearly sacrifice and his vow*. But on this occasion one of the dearest of his domestic companions did not accompany the annual pilgrim in his journey to sacred Shiloh. *Hannah went not up*. This did not arise from female caprice or any decay of devotion. Her reason was a valid one; for she said unto her husband, I will not go up, until the child be weaned, and then I will bring him, that he may abide there for ever. The favourite object of this tender mother was to give her son an excellent education, to instil into his mind all high, holy and honourable principles, and to lead him to the fountains of wisdom. When the *child was young, she took it up with her* to the temple, and after presenting her gifts, according to the ori-

ental custom, and making sacrifice, she remarked to the venerable high priest, that for this child, she had prayed; that her maternal wish was answered; and that as Heaven had granted her petition, to the service of Heaven this son should be devoted.—He accordingly actually officiates at the altar, *being a child girded with a linen ephod*. Here some dissipated or mercenary mothers would have left him to take his chance, either to *live by the altar* like a priest, or to *perish* like one of its miserable victims. But the matron, whom we now commemorate, had not only a tender heart, but a liberal spirit, a steady judgment, a perspicacious discernment, and that generous prudence, which is the *queen regent of all the virtues*. She knew that youth, innocence, and inexperience ought to be *assisted* in their struggle through the thorns and brakes of the wilderness of this world. She was not satisfied with a single burst of maternal affection, or with bounding her benignity by lines of distance, or a term of years. She was fully apprized that a youth, engrossed by contemplation and study, would either have no leisure for domestic cares, or that in the abstraction of literature, he would wholly lose sight of them; that hence he would be sometimes the natural prey of fraud, and

sometimes the victim of penury: and that all the learning of the east would not procure him from strangers, either *the linen ephod* of the child, or the mantle of the man. She was determined, therefore, habitually to take care, that neither his mind, his health, nor his studies should sustain any detriment from the rude collision of petty cares. But as he was of a sober and studious humour, that the tranquillity of his hermit cell should never be violated; and that he should enjoy uninterrupted leisure to acquire that fund of information, and those useful habits, which might ultimately redound to his own honour, and the general good. In accomplishing so judicious a design, she employed no agent, but her own heart, and no deputy, but her own skill.

The importance of such a provision has been abundantly verified, in the history of Samuel's successful career. Had he been left solitary at Shiloh, neglected by his friends, exposed to the artifice of some, and the temptation of others, he never would have *prophesied* any thing, but his own ruin; and instead of being a judge, would in all probability, have been a prisoner.

Wise and benignant mother! With how much enthusiasm and sensibility wilt thou always be apostrophized, by every son, in every age, who has felt the fostering warmth of maternal affection!

In addition to thy acts of kindness, from the dawn of genius to its glorious meridian, thy periodical assiduity of attention shall be ever remembered! That little vestment, which, to render the present more valuable, was brought, not by one of thine handmaids, not by a careless or venal slave, but by thy *gracious self*, will outlast the weaving of the noblest looms. Like the regretted handkerchief of the fabled Moor, in the unequalled tragedy of the matchless dramatist, “the worms were *hallowed* that did breed its silk.” It made her son amiable, and there was magic in its web. But if the *little coat*, made by a mother, was not, as a poet’s fancy might suggest, of a silken texture, it was of wool from a Gideon’s fleece, and watered with the kindest dews of Heaven.

STORY OF MOSES.

“And he sat down by a well. Now the priest of Midian had seven daughters: and they came and drew water, and filled the troughs to water their father’s flock. And the shepherds came and drove them away: but Moses stood up, and helped them, and watered their flock.”—*Exodus* xi. 15, 16, 17.

IN the juvenile days of Moses, that prophet having unfortunately interfered in a quarrel between an Egyptian and a Jew, went into voluntary exile. Provoked at the assassination of a subject, the reigning monarch sought to slay Moses, who fled from his wrath into the land of Midian. Here he took up his residence in the vicinity of a well, and led a sort of hermit’s life, “unknowing and unknown.” By a glance at the history of pastoral ages, it will be seen that the task of drawing water, either for household purposes, or for the use of the fold, generally devolved upon women. The simplicity, the indolence, or the rudeness

of the patriarchs caused them to forget that the obvious destination of the softer sex, was for lighter labour; and that men, as the natural guardians of females, should ever rescue their fair wards, from ignominious thralldom. But the priest of Midian, with all his learning, was it seems clownish and inattentive, in this respect, for he suffers his whole family of girls to "draw water, and fill the troughs to water his flock." In those days, and in that arid region, reservoirs, wells, and cisterns, attracted almost as great crowds as fashionable watering places have in times more modern, and in a climate less fiery. Indeed, throughout the east, wells were a kind of haunt; and at their margin were to be found, pilgrims and patriarchs, shepherds and herdsmen, blushing beauties and clamorous boors, all eager to allay their own thirst, or that of the animals, lowing and bleating around. In such a promiscuous crowd, grossness and incivility would always mingle, perhaps predominate; and not only delicate ears, but even graceful forms, would sometimes be wounded. The daughters of the Egyptian priest did not repair to the well of Midian, without exposure to the attacks of brutality. Certain

shepherds of the country, "fellows of the baser sort," in all probability Midianitish *democrats*, influenced by the wonted churlishness; impudence, boorishness, and ferocity of the republican character, came and drove these unoffending females away. Perceiving this harshness, and, in a spirit of gallantry, resenting it, Moses, with the courtesy of a cavalier, quitted his seat and his meditations, civilly helped the insulted maidens, and relieved them from the labour of watering their flocks. This is a pleasing instance of primeval politeness, and demonstrates that even in the simplest stages of society, the man of feeling, taste, and judgment, will always support the rights of woman.

The sex have a paramount claim to our protection, tenderness, and courtesy. Years cannot cause my dim eyes to survey the fair carelessly, or with indifference. My heart still palpitates at their approach, and, in despite of the discipline of philosophy, my nerves vibrate, like the keys of a harpsicord, from the lightest touch of a charmer. Once in the absurd misapprehension of youth, I thought the character of a woman-hater worth imitating, and even attempted to hurl a feeble lance at the daugh-

ters of Ève. But time has taught me the impolicy and baseness of such a warfare. I have not only made a truce, but concluded a firm and lasting peace with the ladies. I pride myself that they still admit an old bachelor to their toilets, and that they will not refuse a dropped fan, though presented to them by a gray-headed gallant. If I hear the pleasing rustle of silk against my study stairs, I make shift to hide my spectacles, and at the expense of my gouty limbs, cheerfully resign my obsolete arm chair to the occupancy of the fair sex. I am a very Moses to resent any ill treatment they may receive; and did modern ladies watch and water sheep, like the seven shepherdesses of Midian, I am sure I should "right merrily" fill the bucket.

The gallantry of the attentive Moses was not unrequited. It procured him an invitation to the house of the priest, whose daughters had been thus protected by the shield of civility. The fruits of good breeding were the gratitude of a venerable divine, and the hand of Zipporah his daughter.

Thus it may be learned by every young man, eager for a pleasant passage through life, that

attention to women honours both the giver and the receiver. Nothing is to be gained by rudeness to the sex. By complaisance to them much may be acquired. He who is universally decried by women, is rarely very popular in male society. Nature intended the two sexes should live in amity. Let the good understanding continue. If we treat our female friends with courtesy, and with tenderness, if we listen to their voice with attention, bow at their approach, and sigh at their departure, we shall be liberally remunerated. Selfishness alone will dictate such politeness. Woman, naturally frank, generous and sensitive, will hasten to discharge the obligation. On him, who is thus watchful to please her, she will smile with radiance, she will smooth his pillow, she will, like Hotspur's consort, "sing the song that pleases him," and "bind his aching head with flowers."

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THE MAN OF UNDERSTANDING.

“When thou seest a man of understanding, get thee betimes unto him, and let thy feet wear the steps of his door!”—*Ecc. vi. 36.*

YES, in a world of weak ones, it is our duty, it will be our pleasure, and, ye selfish generation, it will be for our *interest* too, to yield favours to the wise, and bread to men of understanding. Our patronage will be but rarely exercised, and few will be the loaves for these wise men to devour, for I looked, and lo! they are a solitary and scanty band, unobtrusive, like the hermit of the mountains.

But, though the “man of understanding” is rarely to be seen, and, though it would profit us much under the sun, to gather the honey of his lips, such is our perverseness, our folly, or our fate, that, untrodden by our “feet,” we suffer the moss to gather on the “steps of his door.”

My study window overlooks the house of an eminent physician: he understands accurately the nice movements of the human machine; he is a botanist, skilled in the properties of plants, the cedar of Libanus, and the "hyssop on the wall;" he has meditated on the system of nature, and he has tried many of the processes of art. I see him turning over the volumes which contain the secrets of medicine, and I hear him describe skilfully, the various modes to blunt, or to extract, the arrows of disease. But, alas! my careless countrymen, "all this availeth him nothing." The blind, the maim, and the halt of our villages, refuse bread to this "man of understanding," and measure their wheat, in brimming bushels, to the quack, who cannot distinguish between a fever and the gout, who applies his nippers to a wart, and thinks he extracts a cancer, who poisons you with antimony, curdles your blood with calomel, drenches you with enfeebling teas, and, as a wit once expressed it, prescribes draughts so *neutral*, they declare neither for the patient nor the malady. If the royal preacher, in whose writings I find my text, had seen whole villages, clamorous, at the midnight hour, for a fetid quack, and

his powders, and "passing by on the other side," when they see the regular practitioner, he would have forgotten, for a moment all the wisdom of the east, and, like provoked Peter; in the gospel, would "curse and swear" at such egregious folly.

Those of my readers, who will gladly turn out of the paths of error, when they hear a warning voice behind them, "here is a better path, walk therein," will, I hope, learn the value of "men of understanding." When their value is once known, the "steps of their door" will be hourly ascended. They will teach us how to think, to speak, and to act. If divines, they will not attempt to persuade you, that heaven cannot be taken, but by the violence of Scotch divinity. If lawyers, they will not demand exorbitant fees to support a rotten cause. If physicians, you will hear them utter no words more cramp than "temperance" and "regimen." If moralists, they will mark the difference between wisdom and cunning, they will point out the weakness, as well as wickedness, of those petty frauds, those iniquitous contracts, those tricking arts of *jockeyship*, so frequent and so disgraceful among a rural people, where nought but

simplicity should be found. To such divines you will cheerfully vote the amplest salary, and you will receive in exchange that wisdom, which we are assured, in a volume of the highest authority, is better than rubies.

ON VERSATILITY.

“For though I be free from all men, yet have I made myself servant to all, that I might gain the more. To the weak, became I as weak, that I might gain the weak: I am made all things to all men.”—1 *Cor.* ix. 19. 22.

In this description of pliability, St. Paul exhibits a happy likeness of his own character, and justifies, by his own illustrious and moral example, the excellency of an accommodating spirit. There is scarcely any feature in the characters of mankind that I view with more complacency, than that useful and pleasing versatility, for which so many “shining ones” have been conspicuous, and which has so liberally contributed to social gratification. As we are, in the holy writings, shadowed out, under the picturesque image of “strangers and pilgrims,” merely visiting, or wandering in this world, it behoves us so to fashion our deport-

ment, that whether we call at the palace, the caravansary, or the cottage, we may conform to the habits of the respective proprietor. When discoursing on the utility of this mode of pleasing, it will not be suspected that I advocate shameful and vicious compliances. My uniform tone of preaching denies this, and every candid reader will draw with me the line of demarcation between the social and salutary doctrine of the saint of Tarsus, and the selfish and hypocritical sycophancy, begotten at St. Omers, and bred in the house of Stanhope.

Plutarch, a writer eminent for morality, has left us the character of Alcibiades, that real Proteus of the ancients, and, from the fondness with which that pleasing biographer insists upon the varied habits and manners of his hero, it is evident that much of the versatility of the accommodating Athenian is proposed as a model to imitate, not as an example to deter. The vice of the sons of Clinias is abundantly reproved by Plutarch, but he proves, in the course of a narration of the most artless simplicity, that, in much of the storm and conflict of life, the yielding willow is to be preferred to the resisting oak. By his pliancy, Alcibiades not only could

"charm the mistress, and fix the friend," but could adorn the senate, and extend empire. To this spirit, the Athenians were more than once indebted for political pre-eminence and safety; and no higher praise of his flexibility can be sought, than that Socrates was his tutor and friend. Half a page of Plutarch gives a bright portrait of this courtier, and it will be useful earnestly to gaze at an object so dazzling. Among the Spartans, he forgot the delicacy of Athenian tables. He was austere in his habits, indefatigable in exercise, sparing of speech. In Asia, he talked in the florid style of mirth, and pleasure, and luxury, and ease. In Thrace, devoted to horsemanship and brimming cups, he rode like a jockey, and drank like a fox-hunter. In the palace of a Persian grandee, the pliant form of the courtly stranger was invested with flowing purple; and among a magnificent people, he discoursed of the "gorgeous east," and of "royal state," and of the "wealth of Ormus and of Ind," and, like prince Bonbobbin, in the fairy tales, nothing fell from his mouth, but gems and gold.

Another brilliant example of this happy and complying temper is to be found in the charac-

ter of Charles Townsend, one of the chancellors of the exchequer of England, than whom, the younger Lyttleton excepted, a more dazzling meteor never flashed within the walls of St. Stephen's chapel. He was a wit, a courtier, a man of business, at will. He could, like Bolingbroke, harangue, "seduce, and impose" in the senate. He was a Yorick at the table, a Chesterfield at the toilet, a Fox at the tavern, and a Pitt at the desk. Burke describes him as a "luminary;" and, notwithstanding the orator of Beaconsfield, in the heat of political controversy, is inveighing against him as a statesman of principles opposite to his own, and, in his opinion, ruinous to his country, yet he talks of him as a "prodigy," and, as the best reason for his popularity, adds, that "he conformed exactly to the temper of the house of commons, and seemed to guide, because he was always sure to follow it." He every day adapted himself to the disposition of others, and adjusted himself before it, as at a looking-glass; he was the delight and ornament of parliament, and the charm of every private society. To please universally was the object of his life. He was always in perfect unison with his asso-

ciates; and, as a climax to this most flattering description of an illustrious character, Mr. Burke adds, that he had no failings, which were not owing to a noble cause, to an ardent, generous passion for fame, a passion which is **THE INSTINCT OF ALL GREAT SOULS**. No man can read this vivid detail of the charms of versatility, without acknowledging its mighty operation in adorning and smoothing life; and as it is our duty to enlarge the fund of social pleasure, let it be impressed on every youthful mind, that the bending humour of Townsend is more pleasant, and more profitable too, than the austere rigidity of John Knox, or the proud obstinacy of the earl of Chatham.

Dean Swift, whose aversion to courtiers was notorious, and who, from the sullen misanthropy of his character, may be justly called an impartial witness, has borne the most honourable testimony in favour of the talents, described in our text. Among the favourites of that writer was Charles Mordaunt, earl of Peterborough, a nobleman no less signalized for his gallantry in queen Ann's wars, than for his skill in pleasing, his variety of talents, and the high power of

varying his means to attain more effectually the end. In a short copy of verses, which, far from being merely complimentary, contain a faithful description of the universal talents of the hero of Barcelona, the dean of St. Patrick's, after observing in the initial lines of his poem, that

“Mordanto fills the trump of fame,
And prints are crowded with his name,”

proceeds to give such a lively sketch of versatility itself, that my readers will easily indulge my usual habit of quotation.

“In journies he outrides the post,
Sits up till midnight with his host,
Talks politics, and gives the toast.
Shines in all climates, like a star;
In senates bold, and fierce in war;
A land commander, and a tar”

Examples and topics to support the theory and practice of St. Paul, crowd upon me, and the usual portion of paper, assigned me by my printer, already overflows with my swelling sermon. The subject will be resumed, and

finished in my next speculation. Meanwhile, let my readers be satisfied with a profile of the versatile powers, and wait, "till a more convenient season," for a full length picture.

Had Paul been thus rigid, he would have half strangled christianity in its cradle, and an earlier martyrdom would have attested the weak judgment of the saint. He was too much a man of the world, to affect such austerity. With a generous frankness, he avows his frailty, his "weakness and wanderings." We also are men of like passions with you, is his honest language; and whether we find him with pharisees or sadducees, in the areopagus of Athens, or before the judgment seat of Agrippa, he is equally the courtier; willing to comply with the modes of fashion, willing to yield to trivial prejudices, for the sake of reconciling obstinacy and incredulity to his momentous schemes. At Thessalonica, in a Jewish synagogue, he reasoned, from scripture premises, in so candid and polite a manner, that many, even of that bigoted nation, consorted with Paul, and none, but "the baser sort," as they are emphatically called; men, upon whom the smiles of civility beam in vain; none, but those "lewd" and despicably low "fellows," rejected his salutary proffers. At Berea, both men and ladies of quality were allured to the christian scheme, not less by the address of the apostle, than by

conviction of the truths he preached. Even in the market-place at Athens, among *philosophers* and other rabble, such was the adroitness of this polished denizen of Tarsus, that some, even of the superficial, sceptical, and volatile Athenians were willing to "hear again," when he urged the mysterious doctrine of the resurrection of the dead. At Corinth, we read, that he "persuaded both Jews and Greeks." To effect this, strikingly exemplifies the flexibility of his temper, and the variety of his talents; he must have possessed both the recondite lore of the first, and the tongues of the second, to have conciliated such intractable characters. His valedictory oration to the elders of Ephesus, is a perfect model of the polite style; by his bland and insinuating accents, he twice softened the ruggedness of soldiers, and procured some remission of the punishment, arbitrarily inflicted by biassed or corrupt tribunals. When the saint perceived, that the ecclesiastical court of Ananias, was torn into schism, by the sectaries of the day, by artfully applying to the prejudices of the sadducees and the pharisees, and exciting a controversy among them, respecting the verity of their peculiar tenets, he escaped

persecution for the time, and obtained an appeal to Felix at Cesarea. His reply to the abuse of the loquacious Tertullus is insinuating, mild, and courtly, and so captivated the corrupt Felix, that this prejudiced governor suffered him to have free access to his friends, and to enjoy some mitigation of his confinement. The exordium of his elegant plea before Agrippa, has been frequently cited, as a brilliant example of the most artful application to the vanity and prejudices of a stern judge, that was ever employed in a court of justice. The effect was magical, and vindicates the power of versatility. Bigotry relented, Persecution dropt his sanguinary scourge; and Truth and Mercy, through the organs even of this partial tribunal, proclaimed loudly, saying, "This man doeth nothing worthy of death or bonds."

In whatever situation we contemplate this shining saint, we find him ever pliant, polite, persuasive, and of the hue of his companions. At Sidon, he attracts the favours of the courteous Julius. On shipboard, and tossed by the lawless surges of the Adriatic, he softens the boisterous mariner. In Rome, by doing, what the Romans did, he dwells in his own house, two

years peaceably. His language is that of bland civility. He uses the winning phrase, fellow-soldier and fellow-labourer. He has no narrow rule of sociability. He consorts, indifferently, with Luke the physician, and Zenas the lawyer, and talks, in the festal tone, of Gaius, mine host. He is glad that Stephanas and Fortunatus are come, and seems to regret, that Demas should go. His politeness is universal. He commends "Phebe our sister," and greets Mary and Julia. Whether it is "the beloved Persis," or Tryphena and Tryphosa, 'tis all one to the saint; he can salute both or either. Such a character must be loved. Such gentleness has the general suffrage.

"Him, portion'd maids, apprenticed orphans blest,
The young who labour, and the old who rest."

In the early part of my life, while I was mingling with men, and oftener in the city than in my closet, I was acquainted, and charmed with an European gentleman, whose versatility, universal knowledge, and fascinating powers, almost persuaded me, that he was a magician, or the wandering Jew himself. As this extrao di-

nary and agreeable acquaintance afforded a lively proof of the advantages of an accommodating temper, I beg permission to sketch in my rude way, one more picture, and I can affirm it is done from a masterly original.

I believe it is Dr. Smollet, who, in one of his novels, describes the hero, in company with a grave, plodding citizen. Adapting himself to the humour of his entertainer, the pliable guest, smokes tobacco, though he was averse to the plant, derides idlers, talks of cent. per cent. and harangues upon the funds, like a professed broker. My European acquaintance acted in the very spirit of this species of facility. Like the Aristippus of the Roman poet, every hue of life became him. He seemed to realize the Ovidian fable of incessant metamorphosis, and classical enthusiasm might fancy him the ever-varying Proteus, recent from his coral cave. He was, at pleasure, a poet, a painter, a musician, a divine. With men of learning and wit, he poured forth the copious stores of extensive erudition. With ladies, he discussed the pretensions of rival coquettes, or described the tints of a modish ribband. In the joviality of wine his chorus was in unison with vociferating re

vellers, and by the couch of the invalid, or at the toilet of beauty, his voice was modulated to the lowest and sweetest tones. I have seen him with a musician, and he held a harp in his hand, and played enchantingly a favourite air, and spoke scientifically of the theory of harmonics. I have seen him with poets, and he talked for hours, with critical precision, of a disputed passage in Virgil or Shakspeare. Three fat-headed American speculators, calling upon him one evening, he interested all their avarice, by proposing a thousand projects of plausible adventure. I have heard him talk on subjects of commerce with a merchant, and he spoke of debentures, and cockets, and clearance, like a custom-house officer. Among the clergy, who so well read as he, in St. Basil, and church history. Among lawyers, he took care to remember anecdotes of sergeant Singleton, and lord Mansfield, and to quote, with technical propriety, the pleadings of the one, and the decisions of the other. In fine, he was a general actor. But, whatever was his cast of parts, he could play them well. He was the Garrick of life; and his delighted audience gave him all their applause.

●

STORY OF SAMPSON.

“Then went Sampson to Gaza, and saw there an harlot.”

Judges xvi. 1.

STRONG as he was, such a journey debilitated him. It was not the length of the way from Timnath; it was not the rugged road, nor the irksomeness of a hard trotting mule; it was not a stroke of the sun, nor a bleak air, that shook the nerves, and prostrated the life of Sampson, for not one of these circumstances is even glanced at by the historian; no, he saw in one of the stews of Gaza, a venal beauty, and was undone. His wit evaporated; his wisdom turned babbler; he lost his vigilance, his eyes, and his life.

One licentious indulgence excites to another. The blandishments of this courtesan allure to the cells of the whole sisterhood. He lays his head in the lap of voluptuousness, and gives full scope to criminal desire. For it came to pass

afterward, that he loved a woman in the valley of Sorek, whose name was Delilah.

Let us ponder a little on the history of these unlucky amours. A sketch of the wars and vicissitude of passion is of more interest, than the narrative of a battle, or a siege, or the annals of empire.

To display a striking, as well as useful contrast, it may be correct to view Sampson, before he entered the gates of Gaza, and after his acquaintance with two bad women.

His first was by no means a love adventure. It was in the style of chivalry, without a damsel. Lurking in the vines of a rude territory, a lion roared against our juvenile hero, who, as it is in a lively manner expressed, rent his ferocious adversary (as he would have rent a kid). A bold encounter, but not half so dangerous as the smiles of the lady in the valley of Sorek. Mere brute force, however, was not the sole attribute of Sampson. For seven days he tortures the ingenuity of thirty friends to resolve an enigma. He has the palm of wit and the chaplets of victory; by his art he destroys the property, and by his arm, the life of his enemies. Not only the family of his father, Manoah, but the whole

circumjacent region must have rung with the praises of this youth of promise; and even indifferent men and abstract reasoners, from such imposing premises, would draw the happiest conclusion.

But behold how, in one hour, so great riches come to nought. Thus far, what a tissue of brilliant achievements do we admire. The next scene is madly mortifying. In the very summary of the ensuing page of his story, what are the humillating particulars of his downfall? Sampson, the valiant, the witty, and the wise, is the dupe of female jugglers; is enticed; is overcome. In the arms of a "twining Lais" of the Philistines, his supernatural strength melts away. He awakes out of this lethargy of pleasure, and hopes to go out, as at other times, rejoicing in his might. But the energy of his soul is no more. He, whom once nothing could restrain, is bound. He grinds in the prison house, and dwindled into a buffoon, is *invested with his motley* to amuse the rabble.

In the life of this extraordinary personage, it is matter of regretful speculation that the field of honour should be exchanged for the valley of Sorek. Hence an abundant crop of evil. It

was not the Philistines; it was impure passion, that extinguished the discernment of Sampson. He never saw any object clearly, after he went to Gaza, and saw an harlot. It is true, he saw Delilah, but, probably, through the obscurity of nocturnal hours. Of her arts, of her perils, he surely had but imperfect vision. Hoodwinked by pleasure, he could not see the seven locks of his head, scattered on the toilet of a wanton. The scissors of a gipseey proved sharper than the sword of enemies; and the flowing hair of the hero, once covered with laurel, is now tortured into meretricious ringlets, or periwigs some pimp in Delilah's antichamber.

Genius, said the amiable clergyman, with whom I studied divinity, is invariably connected with strong passions. When men, exquisitely organized, indulge pleasure, it is with that species of fervour, noted in the oriental page; it is with all their hearts, and with all their soul, and with all their strength, and with all their mind. The insensible loungee, the self-engrossed coxcomb may sleep upon the knees of Delilah, and wake again to puny life. But of that opiate of joy, of the golden cup of abomination, which the harlot presents, if *you* sip, man of feeling,

you will "drain the chalice to the lowest and foulest dregs." Keep the high and safe ground; beware of sliding down the slope of pleasure. It conducts you to some vale of Sorek, beneath whose roses are the serpent and the dagger. Go up to Parnassus and see the Muse: an excursion to Gaza to see a mortal beauty is not half so exhilarating.

ON HOSPITALITY.

“And the old man said, peace be with thee; howsoever let all thy wants lie upon me; only lodge not in the street.”—*Judges xix. 20.*

IN an early epoch in the Jewish history, in those good natured days, when there was no king in Israel, an enamoured Levite undertook a journey to reclaim a wandering concubine. He had better success than lovers in general, when in pursuit of a false fair. For though she proved wanton, and had forsaken her keeper, yet he found her, at length, not in a bagnio, but in her father's house, and, more wonderful still, willing to return to her first love. This ardent youth, who appears to be a genuine son of Adam, remains five days in high spirits at Bethlehem-Judah, drinking with the courteous father, and courting an agreeable girl, without once reflecting upon her infidelity, or her capricious retreat. He found her once more kind, and as charming as ever, and therefore resolves, in the spirit of a most rational philosophy, not to mar

the joy of the hour, by repiningly adverting to the past.

Still, however, he is not unmindful of his rural tenement on the side of Mount Ephraim. Man is never more happy, than when at home, with all his little comforts about him; and home never appears more eligible, than when we have found some companion, to whom we can point out the prospect of our own acres.

This was precisely the case with our Levite. On the commencement of his journey, we may, without violence, imagine, that he thought it would probably prove inauspicious. Whether the female, who had fled, would ever return, was a matter of the utmost incertitude. But when, from this painful state of suspense, he is relieved, by the smiles of the fair fugitive, the exclamation of propitiated love must be, "what rapture to have you restored to Mount Ephraim and to me."

No one appears to rejoice more in this reconciliation, than the father of the fickle damsel. At the first interview, we read that he rejoiced to meet the Levite. The whole scene is a pretty picture of the simple, but sincere hospi-

ality of primeval times. Every morning, the son prepares to depart, and the father urges to stay; and with such persuasive importunity, doth he invite to tarry all night, and let the heart be merry, that he must have been a sulky Israelite, who would not talk, and cheerfully too, for five nights, with such a benevolent old gentleman.

Now I hear thee, thou uncharitable sceptic, assert that this was selfish hospitality; that the man of Bethlehem-Judah, anxious to be free from the freaks of a gadding girl, was willing to conciliate the son-in-law; that she herself was an artful coquette, and prompted her sire to treat her lover well, for mercenary purposes. I hear from thee many such cold hypotheses. Luckily for the Levite, none of his entertainers, in his romantic journey, were unbelievers. They viewed him sincere and affectionate as he appeared. He found from them kindness, soft words and plenteous fare. That this was true, may be seen, even by the disciple of Pyrho, if he will journey on a little farther with the sojourner of Mount Ephraim.

On the return of the reconciled lovers, evening approaching, their servant, timid from im-

pending night and obscurity, advises to halt and lodge in Jebus, a city of the vicinage. The Levite, with the sentiment of nationality, prefers accommodation in Gibeah, a city of Benjamin, one of the tribes. The benighted travellers find themselves there unknowing and unknown. Without shelter, weary and desolate, they find no seat except in the street, "for there was no man, that took them into his house to lodging."

And, behold, there came an old man from his work. He is described as returning from his fields at even, like any other tired mortal: some of the eastern writers would have sublimed his beneficence, and called him the Genius of Hospitality.

But his actions gave him the best title. When he saw forlorn strangers, wandering without a home, he proposes the quick and impatient question, whither goest and whence comest thou? When told the little story of the Levite's adventures, that he was wayfaring home, and that though he was provided with all necessities no one of the citizens would receive him into his house, or suffer him to toast his bread, or warm his wine at the fire, what is the reply?

Was it that of a morose old man, willing to escape from the suspicious or wearisome narrative of a stranger? No; the first accents were peace and friendship and invitation.

“Let all thy wants lie upon me, only lodge not in the street.”

All the compliments that a voluble Frenchman repeats are as “sounding brass” to the pure gold of genuine hospitality. She stands, kind power, like the wisdom of Solomon, at the gates, and at the coming in at the doors, and courteously invites us to come in. Her language is kind, not formal; her gestures are few, but expressive. In the bad days of this stormy world it is she, who cherishes with the warm garment, and warmer welcome.

Be careless, ye pilgrims of the day, where ye wander, or on what coast ye are thrown; if ye can discern hospitality in the street of a strange city, or on the strand where ye have been wrecked, I will promise a short oblivion to your woes. Like the tender host of the Levite, she will make your hearts merry with her cordial wine; she will feed even the dog that follows ye. She will speak peace to the houseless wayfarer; she will say, in the beauty of scriptural lan-

guage, behold the day groweth to an end; lodge not in the street; lodge here, that thine heart may be merry, and to-morrow get you early on your way that thou mayest go home.

ON THE STUDY OF NATURE.

“ And he spake of trees, from the cedar tree that is in Lebanon, even unto the hyssop that springeth out of the wall: he spake also of beasts, and of fowl, and of creeping things, and of fishes.”—1 *Kings* iv. 33.

THE historian of the Jewish kings, in his life of Solomon, after describing him potent abroad, peaceful at home, and magnificent in the palace, concludes with an eulogium upon his wisdom; adding, as proof, his skill in the various topics of natural history. The ambitious tree, the grovelling shrub; the lion; the mole; the volant, the creeping, and the swimming tribes had all been subject to his researches. The Buffon and the St. PIERRE of Israel, he could narrate the striking beauties of organized matter, with the eloquence of the one, and feel with the sentiment of the other. Though the cares of state administration were many, yet he would find or create opportunities to exchange the council-

board for the country; and prefer to the study of politics, the study of plants. In the wood, and in the field, the picturesque of nature would charm more than the tapestry of his palace; and as he roamed with the fair Egyptian of Pharaoh's race, he might note, both as a philosopher and lover, the coo of the dove, the buds of the pomegranate, the frolicsome kids, and the ruby rose.

In several parts of these fugitive papers, I have already and warmly insisted on the advantages of a taste for natural beauty. This is a Venus de Medicis universally to be found. Italian connoisseurs may saunter through the galleries of Florence, admiring animated canvass, or symmetrical marble. I do not wish to vilify their pursuit. If it be lounging, it is of a liberal sort. I would not only love the poet and the painter, but the candid critic of their works. But landscape, described in a poem, or mimicked on the walls, cannot compare with the real glories of nature. Her trees, her animals, her wood and water, her broken and cultivated ground, her fish that swiftly glide, or her insects, which tardily creep, were the ob-

jects that once interested a great prince, and ought now to interest those who, like him, would be observing, moral, and wise.

Get up early then to the vineyard, and see if the vine flourish and the tender grape appear. Mark the progress of vegetation; observe the characters and habitudes of animals; trace the forest. It has more curious scenery than a theatre. Let the eye of admiration be now raised to the top of the cedar, and now depressed to the hillock of the ant. The nest of the bird, and the haunt of the trout, trifling, as to the inconsiderate they may appear, will reward a philosophic scrutinizer of nature's operations with abundant and perennial pleasure. Swammerdam, a patient naturalist, has been derided by the levity of sciolists, for speculating long and intently upon the lowest subjects of the animal kingdom. The censure was sudden and weak. He was always innocently; often usefully, and honourably employed.

The love of nature is a sweet and exhilarating passion. He, who botanizes on the mountain, or explores the latent root in the forest is a healthy and a happy man. To the fiercer gales

of life, the soldier, the mariner, and the cit are exposed. But if the *secure* quiet of Virgil be the lot of mortals, it certainly is his, whose ambition soars not above the cedar, and whose avarice digs not below the hyssop.

ON FRETFULNESS.

“Doest thou well to be angry for the gourd?”—*Jonah*
iv. 9.

OR to fret, at any of the petty accidents of life? Thou discontented mortal, undoubted descendant from Jonah, and his peevish tribe, why doest thou suffer a cloud to gather on thy brow, because there is a little one, *no bigger than a man's hand*, rising in the sky? Be serene thyself, and it will import little whether it rains or blows.

Of all vile habits, that of fretfulness is the least tolerable. Many offensive things, which vulgar people do, are sometimes laid aside, and their neighbours are occasionally freed from annoy. But fretfulness is a kind of perpetual motion, excited no less by a creaking door, than a fit of the gout. It is a voracious monster, and feeds upon minute as well as vast vexation. Let us strive, therefore; to pluck off this blister from the heart; and, even in the hottest and most oppressive days of life, care

not whether the shelter of a "gourd" be extended over us or taken away. I have always grieved, ever since the schoolmistress bid me read, with a loud voice, Jonah's journey to Nineveh, that the prophet should chafe, like a roused brute of the forest, because a gourd, a short lived plant of the night had wilted. It appears to me, even, if the sun beat fiercely upon his head, and the east wind blew sharply upon his breast, that the prophet might have found so much alleviation of his misfortunes, in beholding "sixteen thousand" people, and "also much cattle," spared from destruction, that a dead "gourd" would not have given him the spleen. I cannot help feeling a degree of indifference, and, perhaps aversion towards this fretting messenger to the Ninevites. I have a profound respect for all, and a warm affection for most of the other prophets. Many were courtly, as well as ingenious writers. I admire the sublimity of Isaiah, the sensibility of Jeremiah, and the generous zeal of Ezekiel. Even the lowly Amos, the herdman of Tekoah, though the narrowness of his education has induced a degree of rudeness in his writings, still I believe him to be as honest a prophet as ever ut

tered a prediction. But as for Jonah, setting aside his disobedience, selfishness and vanity, he was so sulky and so morose a mortal, that I never could like his character or his principles. I am not so uncharitable as to wish that he had actually been digested by the whale which swallowed him; but he ought to have kept no better company; for not the "great Leviathan of the deep" ever floundered more impatiently in his element, than discontented Jonah in the voyage of life.

On a review of what I have thus far written, I believe that there is no occasion to look so far back as the history of an ancient prophet for an instance of anger employed upon trifles. If I should lift the window-sash of my study, I should discern whole companies fretting and fuming for the "gourd."

Walking in a studious mood, by the side of a neighbour's garden fence, I observed him stamping upon the ground with such disorder, that I concluded he was in convulsions, or practising a dance of St. Vitus. Humanity urged me towards him, and I meditated medical rather than moral aid. But to my eager question of "What aileth thee?" he replied to my aston-

ishment, that the bugs had blighted all his cucumbers, and was not that enough to make a wise man mad? I endeavoured to compose his perturbed spirits, and quoted to him Seneca upon tranquillity of mind, and part of one of Basil's homilies; but all in vain. He appeared to be possessed, and it required an abler exorcist than myself to drive his devil away. I retired, and thinking of Jonah and his "gourd," could not help allegorizing a little in Bunyan's manner. My neighbour *Irritable's* forefathers, quoth I, probably cultivated cucumbers without the wall of Nineveh; they fretted when the fruit was cut off, and my worthy friend here, I find, has not yet been cured of the *family taint!*

ON DISAPPOINTMENT.

“Wherefore, when I looked that it should bring forth grapes, brought it forth wild grapes?”—*Isa.* v. 4.

Thus fares it with most of the vineyards in the world. Dressed by the vintager, they promise plausibly, as a courtier. In the season of maturity, what is the fruit? When we “looked” for perfection, we found our hopes mocked with wildness, crudity, bitterness; with fruit austere, as sloes; or sour, like the berries of the gadding barberry.

The poet Isaiah, for the prophet no less than Homer, merits the title of bard, has beautifully allegorized the common disappointments of man. He describes his beloved as the proprietor of a vineyard in a champaign country. Well fenced, well planted, freed from stones, protected by a tower, and crowned by a wine press; such a vineyard might inspire the owner with the fondest expectations of pressing sweet

fruit, and of drinking the purest nectar. Mortified Hebrew, I see thee walk away with anguish. At autumnal noon, thou hast met the vine dresser, and he has told thee of blight, and mildew, and caterpillar; that the grapes are wild, acid, their juice vinegar; that the vineyard is no better than a thistle field, and thy time and money wasted without recompense. I hear thee, in the bitterness of thy heart, exclaim, "What could have been done more to my vineyard, that I have not done in it?" It is natural. Many a parent has spoken in the same language, when hearing of the sorry adventures of a prodigal son. Where men have lavished wealth, hours, affection, whether in rearing grapes, or offspring, if either prove *wild*, it is like a dart through the liver.

Wild grapes, in the sense which the prophet intends, are "as plenty as blackberries." Hoyden girls, forward boys, and dissipated men, are all wild grapes. Parents may dress, and schoolmasters prune as much as they please; all culture is in vain, where there is rottenness at root and heart.

The banks of many a western lake, and the savannahs of Georgia and Tennessee have been

converted by land-jobbers into vineyards, more productive than those of Bourdeaux. or Burgundy. Emigrant and eager vintagers have "looked" for the fruit of their labours, and expected to behold high piled baskets, and flasks by the dozen. Such vineyards have yielded prodigiously; barren sand and bankruptcy have been the wild grapes, which set the speculator's teeth on edge. Very sour, unpalatable fruits, too hard of digestion, even for an ostrich.

The French, for a succession of ages, blest with fertile vineyards, and crowned with chaplets, were a merry people. In an evil hour, the rage of improvement urged them to grub up that mantling vine, which had so long proved

"From storms a shelter, and from heat a shade,"

and to plant certain bastard slips, called trees of liberty. Over the whole kingdom they threw a shade more mournful, than yew or cypress. Great expectations have been entertained of the fruit of these trees; but, it is said, noblemen and gentlemen of taste declare nothing can be more "wild," and even the poor peasant

shakes his head at the forced production and mawkish flavour of the fruits of liberty, and sighs for a grape or filbert, from the gardens of St. Cloud or the Thuilleries.

INGRATITUDE OF REPUBLICS.

“For the workman is worthy of his meat.”—*Matt. x. 10.*

If there be such a personage as Truth, this assertion certainly belongs to her family, for what can be more just, than that a vintager should eat some, at least, of those grapes, which he had planted and watered.

But, judging from the practice of the world, at the present time, one would think my text was grown obsolete, and that its principle was not recognised. In the shambles, there is always meat enough, but how little is bestowed upon workmen. Parasites, buffoons, fiddlers, equestrians, French philosophers, and speculators gormandize; but I see Merit, that excellent workman, that needeth not to be ashamed, as lank and as lean, as my old tabby cat, who has had nothing to eat but church-mice for a year.

Though I am not saluted a brother, by any legitimate parson, and belong to no ministerial

association on earth, yet I cherish great respect, and feel a cordial regard for the established clergy. I consider them, with few exceptions, as faithful workmen; they make us moral; they instruct our youth; they lead sober and peaceable lives.

“ Along the cool, sequestered vale of life,
They keep the noiseless tenor of their way.”

They are wise, they are amiable men, though they are ignorant of foolish questions, and “strivings about the law;” they understand perfectly the great rules of life. Such men, therefore, are worthy of their meat, and should be liberally provided. They labour much: few men labour more; they are compelled to exercise, not only the head, but the hands. The private estate, as well as the gospel vineyard, claims their care. When the drudgery of the year is done; when numerous sermons have been composed, and numerous sick-chambers visited; when they have been in watchings and weariness often, what meat will the benevolence of a parish bestow? Verily a morsel. A beggarly pittance, called a salary, and that pittance

scantily and grudgingly paid. When I visit a village, covered with stores and shops, and cultivated by opulent farmers; when I hear the inhabitants boast of their flourishing circumstances, and recount how many bushels of wheat they threshed last year, and how well it sold; if I should be informed, that their parson's annual stipend is but sixty pounds, in despite of all their boasted riches and ostentation, I should think them unworthy to enter a church.

If I should repair to any place, where men congregate, and describe to them one, who, in an hour of jeopardy, had quitted his hearth, travelled many wearisome miles, been exposed to sickly air, been shot at for hours, and frequently without a crust, or a draught to supply the waste of nature: If I should add, that all this peril was sustained, that we, at home, might live in security, not one of my audience, provided speculators and bloodsuckers were not of the number, would deny, that the OLD SOLDIER was a worthy workman. But where is his meat? Oh, my good sir, do not propose that question in a republic; you know that a republic is never bounteous. Belisarius *ask* for their obolus here, as well as at Rome. But here the busi-

ness ends. They *receive* in Great Britain, and elsewhere. You might as soon expect moderation in a Frenchman, or knowledge of the belles lettres in a country attorney, as that a *commonwealth* should be grateful.

ON CLEANLINESS.

“Let thy garments be always white; and let thy head lack no ointment.”—*Eccl.* ix. 8.

THOUGH much occupied in preaching, and noted, as some of my friends say, for a certain poetical heedlessness of character, yet, if not oftener, at least every Sunday, I copy the common custom, and invest my little person in clean array. As, from a variety of motives, and none of them, I hope, bad ones, I go with some degree of constancy to church, I choose to appear there decently and in order. However inattentive through the week, on the solemn day, I brush, with more than ordinary pains my best coat, am watchful of the purity of my linen, and adjust my cravat, with an old bachelor's nicety. While I was lately busied at my toilet, in the work of personal decoration, it popped into my head that a sermon in praise of neatness would do good service, if not to the world at large, at least to

many of my reading, writing, and thinking brethren, who make their assiduous homage to mind, a pretext for negligence of person.

Among the minor virtues, cleanliness ought to be conspicuously ranked; and, in the common topics of praise, we generally arrange some commendation of neatness. It involves much. It supposes a love of order, an attention to the laws of custom, and a decent pride. My lord Bacon says, that a good person is a perpetual letter of recommendation. This idea may be extended. Of a well-dressed man, it may be affirmed, that he has a sure passport through the realms of civility. In first interviews we can judge of no one, except from appearances. He, therefore, whose exterior is agreeable, begins well in any society. Men and women are disposed to augur favourably rather than otherwise, of him, who manifests, by the purity and propriety of his garb, a disposition to comply, and to please. As, in rhetoric, a judicious exordium is of admirable use to render an audience docile, attentive, and benevolent, so at your introduction into good company, clean and modish apparel is, though an humble, at least a service of our exertions.

As these are very obvious truths, and as literary men are generally vain, and sometimes proud, it is singular that one of the easiest modes of gratifying self-complacency should, by *them*, be, for the most part, neglected; and that this sort of carelessness is so adhesive to one tribe of writers, that the words poet and sloven are regarded as synonymous in the world's vocabulary.

This negligence in men of letters sometimes arises from their inordinate application to books and papers, and may be palliated by a good-natured man, as the natural product of a mind too intensely engaged in sublime speculations, to attend to the blackness of a shoe, or the whiteness of a ruffle. Mr. Locke and sir Isaac Newton might be forgiven by their candid contemporaries, though the first had composed his essay with "unwashen hands," and the second had investigated the laws of nature, when he was clad in a soiled night-gown. But, slovenliness is often affected by authors, or rather pretenders to authorship; and must then be considered as highly culpable; as an outrage of decorum, as a defiance to the world, and as a pitiful scheme to attract notice, by means which

are equally in the power of the drayman and the chimney sweeper. I know a poet of this description, who anticipates renown no less from a dirty shirt, than from an elegant couplet, and imagines that when his appearance is the most sordid, the world must conclude, of course, that his mind is splendid and fair. In his opinion, "marvellous foul linen" is a token of wit, and inky fingers indicate humour; he avers that a slouched hat is demonstrative of a well stored brain, and that genius always trudges about in unbuckled shoes. He looks for invention in rumpled ruffles, and finds high sounding poetry among the folds of a loose stocking. But this smirched son of Apollo may be assured there is no necessary connexion between dirt and ability. It is not necessary to consummate such a marriage to produce the fairest offspring of the mind. One may write brilliantly, and, strange as it may seem, be dressed well. If negligence be the criterion of genius, a critic will, in future, inspect a poet's wardrobe rather than his works. Slovenliness, so far from being commendable in an author, is more inexcusable in men of letters than in many others, the nature of whose employment compels them to be conversant

with objects, sordid and impure.* A smith from his forge, or a husbandman from his fields is obliged sometimes to appear stained with the smut of the one, or the dust of the other. A writer, on the contrary, sitting in an easy chair at a polished desk, and leaning on white paper, or examining the pages of a book, is, by no means, *obliged* to be soiled by his labours. I see no reason why an author should not be a gentleman, or at least as clean and neat as a quaker. Far from thinking that filthy dress marks a liberal mind, I should suspect the good sense and talents of him, who affected to wear a tattered coat, as the badge of his profession. Should I see a reputed genius totally regardless of his person, I should immediately doubt the delicacy of his taste, and the accuracy of his judgment. I should conclude there was some obliquity in his mind, a dull sense of decorum, and a disregard of order. I should fancy that he consorted with low society; and, instead of claiming the privilege of genius, to knock and be admitted at palaces, that he chose to sneak in at the back door of hovels, and wallow brutishly in the sty of the vulgar.

It is recorded of Somerville and Shenstone, that they were negligent, and of Smith that he was a sloven. But disregard of dress is by no means a constant trait in the literary character. Edmund Waller, Prior, Swift, and Bolingbroke, were remarkably neat in their persons, and curious in the choice of apparel; and of David Mallet, Dr. Johnson observes "that his appearance was agreeable, and he suffered it to want no recommendation that dress could give."

The orientals are careful of their persons, with much care. Their frequent ablutions, and change of garments are noticed in every page of their history. My text is not the only precept of neatness that can be quoted from the bible. The wise men of the east supposed there was some analogy between the purity of the body and the mind; nor is this a vain imagination.

I cannot conclude this sermon better than by an extract from the works of count Rumford, who in few and strong words, has fortified my doctrine.

"With what care and attention do the feathered race wash themselves and put their plumage in order; and how perfectly neat, clean,

and elegant do they ever appear. Among the beasts of the field, we find that those, which are the most cleanly, are generally the most gay and cheerful; or are distinguished by a certain air of tranquillity and contentment; and singing birds are always remarkable for the neatness of their plumage. So great is the effect of cleanliness upon man, that it extends even to his moral character. Virtue never dwelt long with filth; nor do I believe there ever was a person scrupulously attentive to cleanliness, who was a consummate villain."

STORY OF JACOB.

“ In the morning behold it was Leah.”—Gen. xxix. 25.

THIS, as Macbeth says, inspecting his crimsoned hand in the play, was “ a sorry sight” to the luckless Jacob. From the “ blear eyes” of an unexpected bride, the gazing patriarch could discern reflected no very charming prospect of matrimonial felicity.

Without anticipating too soon the reflections, or fancying the chagrin of the injured Jacob, it is better to narrate certain of his youthful bargains, describe his apprenticeship, or rather vassalage to Love, and sketch a picture of the sanguine hopes, and abused credulity of a young man.

Jacob, the favourite son of a fond mother, is advised by Rebekah, terrified at the hatred and menaces of Esau, to flee from the effects of fraternal resentment, and to lurk for a time in the obscurity of Haran, a remote village, in the

east, where he would not only find the safe shelter of solitude, but the still more friendly cover of a relation's love. Haran was a sweet and pastoral country, amidst whose delicious landscapes he could lose, or at least suspend, the recollection of domestic misfortunes. Haran was the abode of Laban, an uncle and a friend. If the terrors of a brother's vengeance were not lost amid the glories of nature and the charms of sylvan life, they would be mitigated by the kindness, they might be braved by the strength of a relative and a pastoral chieftain. Jacob, who had most unjustifiably defrauded Esau of his father's benediction, was sufficiently alarmed for his own safety, to discern the correctness of this reasoning. He immediately commences his tour, arrives at his asylum, "the land of the people of the east," and suddenly finds himself among a company of shepherds, busied in watering their flocks. This was the very scene for a love adventure, and it immediately occurs. Inquiring of this simple company with the friendly zeal, or, perhaps the rude curiosity of a New-England man, where they belonged, &c. he is answered, that they are inhabitants of Haran; that they know Laban;

that he is in health; and that “behold Rachel his daughter, cometh with the sheep.” This fair girl next appears; and, after certain civilities and gallantries of Jacob, which mark the honesty, simplicity, and tenderness of uncorrupted manners and pastoral times, he informs the damsel, with whom he is suddenly enamoured, of their affinity; and the youthful admirer of Rachel is announced to the son of Nahor. Laban hastens to meet his fugitive nephew, and, with apparent frankness and cordiality, brings him to his house. In a month, Jacob becomes wholly domesticated in this family. At length, this avaricious Jew, in a spirit of speculation, not unworthy of the present age, begins to drive an artful bargain with his unsuspecting inmate. After insidiously hinting that the ties of consanguinity ought not induce him to a gratuitous service, Laban demands his price, and the generous and love sick swain, replies “your daughter.” It must here be noted, that Laban had two daughters, and that there was no small difference in their personal attractions, for “Leah was *tender eyed*, but Rachel was beautiful and well favoured.” Now I will not torment myself and puzzle my readers with the different

and jarring explanations of grave commentators, defining the epithet applied to Leah. From the opposition of the clauses, it is extremely clear that one of the damsels was homely, the other exquisitely beautiful. Jacob chose like a lover, and conducted like a very fond one. He prefers Rachel, and stipulates for a septennial servitude, as the price of her father's consent, and her affection. Laban replies, in a blunt and 'squire Western style, that it was better that Jacob should have her than any body else; and the contract is made. Notwithstanding the extreme length of this period of amorous probation, to the captivated youth it seemed, in the charming language of the original, but a few days, for the love he had to her. A modern lover would have been tired in seven days, but every vicissitude of seven years, found Jacob's heart the same. Of this prolix courtship, the last day, a day of jubilee to love, at length is numbered. Jacob claims his wife. Laban ostentatiously invites his neighbours, and the wedding banquet and bridal couch are spread. The knavery of Jacob's unworthy uncle now appears. During the gayety of nuptial carousals, when the head of an ardent bride-

groom would, in some degree, dance to the bounding of his heart, and in the obscurity of nocturnal hours, a surreptitious consort is treacherously conveyed to his apartment. The dawn reveals the cheat to insulted fondness; for, in the morning——behold it was Leah.

“Ye, who listen with credulity to the whispers of fancy, and pursue with eagerness the phantoms of hope,” learn to be on your guard against the cheating Labans of life, and rely not too implicitly on the expectation of clasping the Rachel of your joys. Ye know not what a night, and the cunning craftiness of man, may bring forth. Some unlucky accident may rush between you and expected bliss. Think not, good easy men, when ye sleep and dream of delight, that the powers of deception are nodding too. No; they are broad awake, and perhaps, maliciously active. See, they are already busy, detaining your Rachel, and, in the morning, ye must be doomed to disappointment, and perceive nothing but a Leah for your consolation.

Thwarted passion is always like a dart through the liver. But disappointments in love

are like a whole quiver. They terribly lacerate the feeling heart. Of all the sufferers in this way, the hapless Jacob I think was the greatest. Violently enamoured with a lovely shepherdess, he has not only to obtain the "slow leave" of a timid virgin, but must toil for the tardy and remote consent of a miserly sire. To this irksome and ignominious exaction Jacob submits. He "fed the sheep, and penned the fold," and bartered severe labour for the smiles of love. He at length rests from the toil of years, and is defrauded of the beauteous premium.

We all know from the context, how well Jacob behaved under the stinging disappointment. After a concise, but pointed remonstrance to his uncle, he calms the tumult of desire, and for the love of his betrothed, promises Laban to set out, like the shepherd swain of Lycidas:

"To-morrow to fresh fields and pastures new."

There is an excellent moral to be drawn from the story; and, if among my readers, any of the more ardent and unsuspecting suffer from a La-

ban, and love like Jacob, let them copy the resignation of a patient man, and wait seven years longer for gratification, rather than be enraged, or dejected for a month, or even a day.

STORY OF RUTH.

“ And it came to pass, when they were come to Bethlehem, that all the city was moved about them, and they said, is this Naomi?”—*Ruth* i. 19.

Now what was there peculiar in the character, or eventful in the fortunes of this woman, to excite such a general commotion in one of the most populous cities of Judah? Probably she was a lady of exalted rank; perhaps a king's daughter; or some unfortunate empress, whose woes, like those of injured Antoinette, claimed the pity not only of a city, but of the world. Thus, impatient curiosity, art thou wont to hurry to erroneous conclusions. I am weary of conjectures. The book of Ruth shall end them.

Ah, the book of Ruth—But what can be learned from a tale so simple, which Thomas Paine has called an idle, bundling story? Believe me, ye among my readers who have heads of fancy and hearts of feeling, that notwith-

standing the deistical effrontery, and impious vulgarism of that renegado, the book of Ruth is a specimen of fine writing, and of amiable morality, not often to be found. It is a drama too; and trust me that neither Euripides, nor Sophocles, nor even the magical Shakspeare, ever conceived, or expressed scenes more tender, than the wife and daughter of Elimelech personated in the highway of Moab, and among the reapers of Boaz.

During the judicial administration of Judah, a famine compelled a man of Bethlehem, his wife and sons to migrate to Moab. The wife soon became a widow. This forlorn female, alone, in the land of strangers, her little estate impoverished, seeing the partner of her cares and the hope of her age extinct, and hearing that the fields of Bethlehem were once more fertile, prepared to return, in a state of mournful expectation, to her native land.—And was there no kind hearted and sociable spirit to attend thee, O Naomi, in this thy pensive pilgrimage; to lend thee a supporting arm, and to wipe the tears of a poor widow? Was every Moabite so inhumane as to be unmindful of an unfortunate stranger? Could not thy drooping

age find at least one staff from the remnants of the broken house of Elimelech? Yes; there was an ORPAH to kiss away the tears of dejection—there was a Ruth to follow, wherever a mourning mother should lead.

Now, although, in the days of my youth and fantasy, I have wandered whole nights, delighted, among the fairy fictions of the Arabian tales; although I read ten times the adventures of Don Quixote, lunatic knight, and of Gulliver, sober faced seaman; although I have followed with anxious eyes, John Bunyan's Christian, whether rising the hill, Difficult; or wading the slough, Despond; yet never have I read a novel of more interest or purer simplicity, than this oriental historiette.

The affectionate maiden, whose name is the title of the story, "clave" to Naomi, and insisted to be her fellow traveller, notwithstanding her most eager and earnest remonstrances. Their contests were friendly; and pleasant will it be to narrate them. To dissuade Ruth from this journey, Naomi employed forcible arguments addressed to the passions of a young woman, addressed to vanity and to love. She told her that, as her sister Orpah chose to remain in

Moab, it would be better to abide there as her companion. In her own country, Ruth could meet many lovers and friends; in another, every face would be a strange one, and probably, every heart would be cold. But neither the expostulation of an experienced matron, nor the dread of poverty, nor of beauty neglected, could frustrate the benevolent purpose of this amiable young woman. For she said, intreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee: For whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge.

Such a determination must be approved by a fond parent; that it was so appears from the expressive silence of Naomi, and from the context, for "they two went until they came to Bethlehem." This was verily a *sentimental journey*; it might be intitled, the Travels of the Charities, and be likened unto the kissing of righteousness and peace.

But, in such a journey there could be but few incidents. The hearts of Naomi and of her daughter were too full for utterance; if I were disposed to record the language of their looks I might protract a prolix sermon. It is needless. Every son of sensibility knows what kind

of dialogue would pass between maternal affection and filial gratitude.

However silent these pilgrims might be themselves, it seems that others talked, and loudly too, at the sight of virtue and beauty in distress. For we read, that it came to pass, when they were come to Bethlehem, that all the city was moved about them, and they said, is this Naomi?

This brings me to a main design of this discourse. My impatient readers, fretting at the desultory Lay Preacher, think, doubtless, that I have wandered from my way. Perhaps this is a correct opinion; but all, except Dutch divines, will leave the narrow and strait path of method, for the sake of a ramble with such agreeable personages, as I have been describing.

“All the city was moved about them, and they said, is this Naomi?” What, a whole metropolis commiserating the distresses of two obscure females! Then it seems, that men can flock together, in the market place for other purposes, than those of gain. A city was in commotion, but not from eagerness to resort to

the tables of the money changer, or the seats of those, who sold doves. A city was in commotion, not because the enemy were without the gates, or the police disturbed within. A city was in commotion, and thousands were anxious, because two fellow-mortals were unhappy.

An English philosopher, an English physician, and a French duke have strongly asserted, in their respective works, that the natural state of man was warfare, and that he is invariably a selfish animal. Away with such philosophy. If this be truth, let me always grope in error. As the philanthropic Sterne declares, we are not stocks and stones; and, though I detest dreary metaphysics, I can believe with Dr. Hartley in the doctrine of vibrations. It is a doctrine of humanity; and every man of Bethlehem-Judah understood it well, when he surveyed with trickling tears, the return of Naomi. Though the "bold bad men" of this world insist, that pity is synonymous with contempt, I pray you, my benevolent readers, never to consult their dictionary. When an afflicted brother or sister knocks, let the gates of charity be thrown wide open. Like the sympa-

thizing city of old, be "moved" at a picture of misfortune. To the Naomis of this world give "beauty for ashes," and provide a benevolent Boaz for every virtuous Ruth.

ON THE SABBATH.

“When will the new moon be gone that we may sell corn? and the sabbath, that we may set forth wheat?”

Amos viii. 5.

IN the dissipated cities of London and Edinburgh, the abuse of sunday has been a common theme of reproach among those weekly guardians of the public virtue, the periodical essayists. Johnson and Hawksworth heard the turbulence of a riot, and the roar of intoxication, from the saloons and taverns of the capital; but their confidence in the innocence, or the piety of the villagers, precluded even the faint inquiry, whether holy days were profaned by rustics. Moralists might repair to the hamlet on week days, and remark vice and folly; but on the sabbath, the young and the old, the careless and the regular, would be found no where, but in a church.

Though the catholic spirit of the age of reason indulge the latitudinarian with an immunity from sabbath formalities, still it might be ima-

gined there could be found, both in town and country, men, who if they did not kneel at the altar, would sit decently and seriously at the fire-side. Libertines might be averse to hear a sermon, or make a response, yet not wish a Sunday away, that they might set forth wheat, the bottle, or card table.

This, however, experience proves a vain imagination. The seventh day is observed by multitudes, neither as a season of worship, nor rest. The country and the city are alike neglectful. On Sunday the husbandman often examines his crops, the merchant computes interest, the rake urges his steed, and the attorney draws his declaration.

This impatience of a day, sacred to quiet and piety, is an odd trait in the character of those, who are saluted with the title of rational. Man is such an indolent being, we are not surprised that he declines the exercises of Sunday, but that he loathes its rest. Of many loungers whom I know, I have computed, with mathematical precision, the yawns on every Sunday and Monday, through the year. I find that the aggregate lassitude of the former to the latter is as ten to one.

The watch is fretfully consulted, and its owner querulously asks why tarry its wheels? why does the dial-point so tardily indicate the twilight hour?

Although the custom of going to church is ancient, honourable, and from social and political, as well as moral and religious reasons, laudable; yet, as my liberal scheme never excludes from the pale of charity, one, who prefers retired to ostentatious devotion, I am desirous of convincing the loiterer at home on the sabbath, that there is no reason for abolishing, or abbreviating that tranquil day. It is better to go up with the Israelites to the temple; but still a domestic sunday may be useful and pious, if correctly improved; and if we do not absurdly wish it away. The apostle prescribes "milk for babes." The moralist good naturedly allows some squeamish ones the indulgence of a vitiated devotional taste, and suggests a pleasant and practicable regimen.

It must, however, be peremptorily required, that no immoral querist ask when the sabbath will be gone that he may sell corn, set forth wheat, or attend to any low and secular cares. If he stay from church, let him not grieve the

sunday. If he will not sing with the organ, let him not play on the violin.

That sunday may delectably pass, it is not necessary that cocks should fight, bowls be quaffed, or bargains be made. The seventh day is like a hermit, who not only utters the orison, and numbers beads, but loves the "studious nook," and the lonely scene. Nothing militating, therefore, with order and peace should be tolerated. The jovial cry may be raised, and "quips and cranks," uttered at "the time to laugh;" but the grave and the composed style, suits the sobriety of the sabbath.

Lest the gayer department of my readers should think I envelop the christian day in funeral weeds and tragic pall, I will strive to convince by my conclusion, that pleasure and piety, like the Hermia and Helena of the poet, "may sing one song, both in one key."

The man who has toiled, or idled six days, may, on the morning of the seventh, choose a retired walk, avoiding the highway, and offence to the weaker brother. I will not be so puritanical or unfashionable, as to hint that the vista of this walk should be a fane, or a chapel. The contemplation of the sublime and beauti-

ful of nature, vivified "by the regent of the world," will naturally excite in a good mind, the proper emotion. Of ecstasy or of rant, there is no need. The homage of the heart is better than the nasal twang of a whole conventicle.

The forenoon may be devoted to popular theology and to sermons. My airy pupils need not start nor turn pale. I do not place them in the tutelage of the dozing Gill, or the mystical Behmen. I do not place them among Westminster divines, or on the Saybrook platform. Privileged with the company of Atterbury, bishop Watson and Laurence Sterne, they may consider themselves not only in a learned and ingenious, but a polite circle. I shall not be called a sour presbyter, by those whom I advise, if I select for their sunday acquaintance, gentlemen as well as christians.

A dinner with some liberal clergyman, though "a dinner of herbs," will prove a better refectation than a corporation feast.

The afternoon will pass without much tedium, if employed among a well ordered family, and rational friends. At intervals, serious poetry will yield a high delight. The gospel son-

nets of Erskine are not recommended, but the moral Young, and the enthusiastic Gray.

At the close of such a day, the observer of it will not repine that religion and the laws refuse, once a week, to permit the sowing of wheat, or the sale of corn. He will rejoice in this tabernacle of rest, and though delighting, at proper periods, in business and the agitations of life, will not forsake the waters of that Sabbath Siloam which flow softly.

INTERMENT OF SAUL.

“ And when the inhabitants of Jabesh-gilead heard of that which the Philistines had done to Saul, all the valiant men arose, and went all night, and took the body of Saul, and the bodies of his sons, from the wall of Bethshan, and came to Jabesh, and burnt them there. And they took their bones, and buried them under a tree at Jabesh, and fasted seven days.”—1 *Sam.* xxxi. 11, 12, 13.

DURING my residence at the university, I had the good fortune to attract the notice, and enjoy the conversation of a country clergyman, whose brilliant talents neither parochial penuriousness could choke, nor the shades of rural obscurity conceal. From the barren uniformity of cloistered life, and the still more arid lessons of solemn pedantry, I used to escape, each vacation, and meet at a parsonage, Wit and Learning, attired in priestly gray. Here, after being “ long detained, in the obscure sojourn” of a college cell, I could reascend to the realms of fancy, and “ feel the sovereign vital lamp” of genius. Here, I lost my tutors, and found

a friend. It was like the exchange of armour between Glaucus and Diomedes; it was brass for gold.

One day, in the study of this liberal Levite, whom I heartily wish was copied in every thing, "*but his nonconformity*," and who ought to preach in Westminster Abbey, rather than in a dissenting conventicle, I picked up one of his neglected sermons. It was Shandean; and the eccentric prebendary of York might have bound it up with his own. As this sermon gave the first hint to that style of lay preaching, which I have, for some years, employed; as it was a model of ease and sentiment in alliance; and as its text was that, which I have selected for my present speculation, I could not deny myself the pleasure of complimenting a curate, who deserves to be a bishop; and if there be any merit in the following thoughts, it is ascribable to him, whose elegant homilies "*inspired easy my unpremeditated page*." In pursuing this track, I shall be acquitted of plagiarism, when my readers remember my prodigal use of inverted commas, and my care to give credit for borrowed thought and expression.

But, while I am thus wandering, the men of Jabesh-gilead seem to be forgotten. This would be too shameful an act of oblivion. It shall not pass; for they deserve a long and honourable memorial.

The inhabitants of the above oriental village, are introduced, with some abruptness, to the acquaintance of the student of the book of Samuel. At the very bottom of the first volume of the prophecy, in a kind of postscript to the work, is found the narrative of the funereal rites paid to the family of Saul. Not the smallest reason appears for this posthumous service. On the contrary, it looks not only odd, but unmerited, and even impious. For, during whole pages, immediately preceding this circumstance, we find nothing but a shameful catalogue of Saul's crimes. To bitter envy of the favoured David's talents, he adds a contempt of the ordinances of the Supreme Being, and neglect of the mandates of his prophets. In a nocturnal visit to the enchantress of Endor, he employs infernal and necromantic arts, to disturb the repose of the tomb; and concludes a life of violence, cruelty, and madness, by an act of suicide. One would suppose that, in those holy times, the bones of so bad a man

would long have been suffered to whiten the Mount of Gilboa; and that not even a common sepulture would have been indulged to a body, prematurely destroyed by an irreligious prince. Here is a mystery; and on the first view of the inhabitants of Jabeshgilead, in mourning weeds, under "the wall of Bethshan," we are astonished at their zeal for the interment of this monarch. That all the valiant men of a respectable district should arise, and hasten by night to Bethshan; which, it must be observed, was a hostile city in Philistia; that they should take the bones of one, whom heaven had abandoned, and who had been his own destroyer; that they should expose themselves to the chance of death, or capture, in an enemy's country; that, mocking this terror, and even the still greater one of the vengeance of the skies, they should take the remains of the flagitious Saul, and "with dirges due, and sad array," follow them to the humble *morai* of primæval burial, and deposit them "under a tree" of their own groves; and that the poignancy of their grief should be such as to induce a fast of seven days; all these circumstances are, apparently, the incidents of wild romance, or like the adventures of the Venetian

Moor. They are "strange, passing strange." But let us develop the occult cause of this conduct, and inquire whether these "mourners, going about the streets" of Bethshan, cannot be justified, nay, admired. As they are all valiant men, it is hard to suppose that so shining a virtue as courage, should be disgraced by mad and vicious companions. Bravery, like the son of Tobias, is "of a good stock," and when you tell me of a good soldier, I look to see him invested, not only with the gorget and sash of military splendour, but with the more lustrous ornament of the manly virtues; the mantle of charity, and the breast-plate of righteousness.

Whether this expectation is generally realized or not, it is fully so in the case of these valiant men of the east; and, as will immediately appear, their conduct, as simply described by the holy narrator, presents one of the most affecting and honourable instances of political and personal gratitude, to be found in the immense tablet of historical composition.

In the eleventh chapter of Samuel, we find a clue, that guides us, at once, through the labyrinth of the above mystery. At the commence-

ment of Saul's reign, Nahash, a prince of the house of Ammon, whose trade was rapine and blood, waged war with Jabesh-gilead. Its inhabitants propose a treaty of peace, which the haughty invader cruelly proposes to clog with the sanguinary and infamous condition of the extinction of their right eyes. Whether in that early period of their history, the inhabitants were few, defenceless, and incapable of opposing a formidable foe; or their senators, like those which have composed and disgraced more modern councils, were willing to yield to ignominious exaction, is not ascertained. But whether weakness or baseness predominated, it is known that the elders of the country implored the truce of a week; and, meanwhile, Saul is apprized of their calamitous situation. His subjects wept, and the monarch sympathized. Indignation at the wrongs of his neighbours, and pity for their misfortunes, dictated a summary and gallant process. He marches against, and defeats the Ammonites, and the men of Jabesh retain their freedom.

They were the ancestors of that weeping band, whom we have seen performing a solemn office to the dead. It was during the y-

Saul, that he avenged the men of Jabesh upon the Ammonites. Many years had elapsed since this brilliant military exploit, which preserved the eyes and independence of a threatened people. Saul had degenerated from the virtues of his youth, had lost the confidence of an inspired mentor, had forfeited the favour of heaven, had surrendered himself up to vice, had lost an army, and, to add to his disgrace, it was by Philistine soldiers he was conquered, had lost three sons, and, finally, losing hope itself, had fallen on his own sword. He is prone on the mountains of Gilboa, without a friend to close his eyes:

“ Fallen from his high estate,
And weltering in his blood.”

Those whom he had rescued from the Ammonites are all as lifeless as he. Then who is there to mourn for Saul and Jonathan? It was the descendants of those, whom Saul had once protected. For, when this grateful race heard the melancholy tidings of the defeat and death of the deliverer of their ancestors, what was their arrangement? Was it oblivious of a re-

mote obligation, or did selfishness whisper, that an old benefit, like an old hound, was a worthless supernumerary? No; a prompt and noble gratitude appeared, nor did it come alone. It was associated with bravery. "All the valiant men arose." Through the mist of ages, I see you, gallant soldiers, your posture erect, but your eyes overflowing. A brave man has, generally, "a tear for pity." You remembered what Saul once was, and how he had preserved your progenitors. You forget nothing but his disgrace and his vices. You had heard that "the battle went sore" against a benefactor, that cruel archers had wounded, and the javelin of despair had killed him. You hastened with military and grateful ardour, your nocturnal march through a hostile region. You buried the bones of your benefactor, with simple and rustic rites; and the memory of your tears, your respect for the dead, and your fasting, shall never fade away. Sensibility shall erect to your virtue

"A monument, and plant it round with shade
Of laurel ever green, and branching palm,
With all your trophies hung, and acts inroll'd
In copious legend, or sweet lyric song."

OF PRECIPITATION.

“ And the driving is like the driving of Jehu, the son of Nimshi; for he driveth furiously.”—2 *Kings* ix. 20.

Nothing is to be gained by such excessive speed. It is the mark of a giddy, hair-brained charioteer. He generally either breaks his neck, or is distanced in the race, by his very eagerness to reach the goal.

Lord Chesterfield took a distinction between haste and hurry, and, with the precision of a lawyer, marked their dissimilitude. There is positively as much difference between these pretended cousin-germans, as between my sermons and those of the archbishop of Canterbury.

Hurry, or as it is called in the text, “ driving,” is a mischievous imp, goading us to dash our feet against a stone; to run, with night cap on, into the streets; in fine, to be ever slovenly and imperfect. You may dispatch business, but if you hurry it, I will not ask for the second

sight of a Scotchman, that I may discover your approaching bankruptcy.

Young man, I say unto thee, walk gently to riches, to honours, to pleasure. Do not run. Observe the impatient racer. He is breathless; he is fallen; bemired and beluted; like Dr. Slop, overthrown by Obadiah; he is distanced; he is hissed. Walk circumspectly; it is Paul's advice; not like a fool, but like a philosopher. Compare the man of moderation, with the man of impetuosity. The first becomes honoured in king's courts. The second is either in jail, or in "poverty to the very lips."

In my boyhood, I remember that a parent would sometimes repeat lessons of economy as I sat on his knees, and then lift me in his arms, that I might look at Hogarth's plates of Industry and Idleness. On youthful fancy the picture was more impressed than the precept. To relieve that description of my readers, who tire at the didactic and the trite style of morality, I will attempt a sketch or two, perhaps with a little *colouring*.

I will imagine the figure of a stripling, educated for business. Seven years he swept and garnished a counting-house; opened it at five,

and did not bar it until nine; sold ropes and boxes for himself, as well as bales for his master; read "The Sure Guide to Love and Esteem," and worked every rule in Hodder's arithmetic. This, all must allow, was a *gentle* pace. No freaks, no starts, discompose the placid life of youth in these habits. Men already look forward, and behold him a bank director, or see him in the largest store in the mart.

One ill-omened day, when the moon was full or the dog star growled, I do not remember which, our sober youth, whose studies were seldom more miscellaneous than an invoice, or bill of lading, unluckily had his eye caught by a land advertisement in a newspaper. It will abridge a tedious process of circumstances, to imagine him in Georgia. How many acres of sand were then bought and sold, and how he dashed about thy falls, St. Anthony, who art more visited than the shrine of Thomas a Becket! Over these sands he already drives in his chariot, with somebody by his side too; a *lady* from *Babylon*. Although the carriage is encumbered with a speculator, and———and imaginary bank-bills in bales, yet how we glide

along, not like the son of Ahimaaz bringing good tidings. The driving is like the charioteership of the son of Nimshi; furious, careless, mad.

But his vehicle, like count Basset's in the play, rolls on the four aces, or something as unstable. He drives furiously against a post. He is an overthrown Pharaoh; not as it is vulgarly expressed, in a *peck*, but in a Red Sea of troubles. He has driven so furiously, that he has snapped his traces, lost the linch pin, and broken the axle of his credit.

A quack is a Jehu; he not only drives furiously himself, but he drives his poor patients too. When I see one of these mountebanks, I always consider the sick he attends, as so many coughing dray horses, soon to be driven out of breath. Ye simple farmers, why do you grease his wheels? When ye are diseased, cannot a leaf of mugwort be obtained, without paying him for the cropping? When you are wounded, your youngest children may bring you a bit of betony, and it will not be charged.

Of the genus of drivers, the negro driver, and the impetuous Frenchmen, are a noted spe-

cies. But it does not demand the perspicacity of a *watchman* to discover their course. They go on, at a fearful rate; and it may demand a thunderbolt to arrest either in the impious career.

ON SCANDAL.

“ Study to be quiet, and to do your own business.”

1 *Thess* iv. 11.

THE Thessalonians, to whom this rule was given, were probably an inquisitive race, and like the men of Athens, spent their time in nothing else, but either to tell, or to hear some new thing. We must frame such a supposition, to excuse St. Paul from the charge of impertinence. For nothing can appear more a work of supererogation, than to tell man, selfish by nature, to live in peace, and to pursue his own advantage. Nature, and the primary laws of being, have told him so already. But this epistle, written at Athens, and sent to Thessalonica, that is, from one tattling, idle city to another, was seasonable and proper, notwithstanding all fine reasoning to the contrary. For myself, I can affirm confidently, that I need not turn over the archives of the Thessalonians, to discover a million of cases, where men study to

be restless, and to pry into other people's business.

Impertinent curiosity is, however, a vice of the village rather than of the city. I am surprised that Paul did not give the direction in the text, expressly to the *country* people. For though impertinence is not so local, as never to be found, except in cottages; still it is a fact, that the askers of *whys* and *wherefores* are generally villagers, and not *cits*. In town, strange sights are so common, and the tongues of fame so numerous, that each inhabitant, distracted with endless variety, thinks it better to mind his own business, than to inspect the concerns of a *thousand* neighbours. In the country, external circumstances being essentially different, the manners of the people assume a different colour; there the incidents are so few, on which glutton curiosity can feed, that even morsel novelties are seized upon with avidity. A farmer's purchase of a silk gown for his wife, or the *irregular* pregnancy of his daughter, I have known to engross, for weeks, the thoughts and chat of those vacant and meddling neighbourhoods, which disobey the precept of Paul.

A certain elegant fabulist among the Latins, describes a race of the busy bodies, running wildly about, out of breath with inquiring, prying into every nook, and, by their restless indolence, wearying themselves and tormenting others. This is a strong picture, and some might say, overcharged; a Darly's caricature of manners rather than the natural strokes of an Italian. But I will engage to find the originals of this portrait, in every village I visit. Men in the country, no less than in town, have various schemes to execute, and many duties which ought to be discharged. But negligent of these, and with the beam in their own eyes, they go groping about to discover a mote in their neighbours.—'Tis a *mote*, in general, that they gaze for most earnestly, and it is a mote that they magnify into a mountain.

This weak, if not criminal conduct, is generally the first begotten of jealousy and rivalry. The malignant inquiries that are then made of a neighbour's fortune or fame, are veiled by an affectation of impartiality and candour. But all may discern that such insidious queries are like arrows discharged from a covert, meant to

deeply wound, and yet, by their course, not to betray the archer.

What is it to thee, censorious woman, if thy frail sister have lapsed by the wayside? Doth her fall shake thy foundation, and hast thou to bear the burden of her suckling? Gaze not at her infirmity, nor circulate her reproach. Con over the catalogue of thy own gallantries, and trust me, thou wilt not have a moment left to read or to compile a scandalous chronicle.

What is it to thee, meddling man, if thy neighbour's goods be attached, hast thou to pay the fees of the officer? Keep thy leger accurately, and peep not into his day book. Ask not of his apprentices, how they fare at their master's board, nor how many dollars he takes in a year. Study to be quiet, and to mind thy own business; and thou wilt find that thou hast little leisure to take an inventory of another man's wealth.

ON MODERN PHILOSOPHERS.

“Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world.”—*Coloss.* xi. 8.

It was the lot and misfortune of St. Paul, in his various visits to the cities of Greece, to hear and see a certain loquacious race of sophists, whom by a nobler name than they deserved, he calls philosophers. Care must be taken, not to confound these frontless babblers with the wise men, who flourished in an early era of the republic. The latter not only loved wisdom, but deserved and received all her favours; the former wore her livery, but were not ranked even among her menials. The names of Socrates and Plato will never be forgotten. The names of those metaphysical spiders, who covered the decayed edifice of the Grecian empire with their filthy cobwebs, cannot easily be remembered.

From every passage, where these sophists are mentioned, in the works of the apostle of Tarsus, it is clear, that they were of the same stamp, had the same stupid heads, and the same

bad hearts, as those of the moderns, who, under the names of Paine, Condorcet, Sieyes and Marat, have "dashed and perplexed the maturest councils."

In an early age of my lay labours, I believe I have already given to this topic an honest and unprejudiced consideration. But the rank poison of philosophy cannot be fully described in a single column of a newspaper; and as, most unfortunately, some philosophers not only live, but teach in America, it may be useful, in my plain way again to instruct my countrymen to beware of such counterfeits.

These men, professing so much, are the veriest sciolists in nature. One might pertinently address one of these vain boasters, in the language of Job, "Canst thou bind the sweet influences of Pleiades, or loose the bands of Orion? Canst thou bring forth Mazzaroth in his season? or canst thou guide Arcturus with his sons?"

A philosopher, in the modern sense of the word, I would define a presumptuous mortal, proudly spurning at old systems, and promptly inventing new. Be the materials ever so naught, be their connexion ever so slight, be the whole

ever so disjointed and crazy, if it be new, these confident architects will swear that their building will accommodate you better, than any that you have previously used. To catch the eye, and abuse the credulity of wondering fools, the puppet-show philosopher exhibits his scheme, gorgeously painted, and gloriously illuminated, and bellows all the time, in praise of his varnished ware. The whole is artfully calculated to captivate and charm all, except those few, who are not suddenly delighted with such representations, who know of what stuff they are made, for what purposes they are intended, and in what they are sure invariably to end. Such men gaze only to deride. But laugh as you please, the philosophers find in human nature such a fund of credulity, that be their draughts large as they may, no protest is anticipated. It is a bank not merely of discount, but deposit, and bolstered up by all the credit of the great body corporate of all the weakness in the world. The moment that a man arrives in this fairy and chivalric land of French philosophy, he beholds at every creek and corner something to dazzle and surprise, but nothing steadfast or secure. The surface is slippery, and giants,

and dwarfs, and wounded knights, and distressed damsels abound. Nor are enchanters wanting; and they are the philosophers themselves. They will, in a twinkling, conjure away kingdoms, chain a prince's daughter in a dungeon, and give to court pages, to lacqueys, and all those "airy nothings," *a local habitation and a name*. If the adventurer in this fantastic region be capriciously weary of his old mansion, the philosophic enchanters will quickly furnish a choice of castles, "roughly rushing to the skies." They are unstable, it is true, and comfortless, and cold, and cemented with blood, but show speciously at a distance, with portcullis most invitingly open, for the *free* and *equal* admission of all mankind.

Those who have been professors of the new philosophy of France, and their servile devotees in America, taint every thing they touch; like the dead insect in the ointment, they cause the whole to send forth an odious and putrid savour. Instead of viewing man as he is, they are continually forming plans for man as he should be. Nothing established, nothing common is admitted into their systems. They invert all the rules of adaptation. They wish to

fashion nature and, society in their whimsical mould, instead of regulating that mould, according to the proportions of society and nature. They glow with intense love for the whole species, but are cold and chill as death towards every individual. Condorcet wrote a kind of general epistle to the churches, which are in *Africa*. He was eager that the blacks of the isles should be emancipated. Philosophy disdains the tardy step of time, and will not tell, even on her fingers, the digits of political and moral computation. Condorcet made clear work. A system is a talisman, and worketh its wonders instantaneously. He told every negro, that could understand him, to run from, or kill his master, and be free. *Nec mora*; nor was hesitation allowed; the whole work might be finished in an hour. A Roman or Grecian projector, in the most lawless season of the ancient commonwealths, would give some time to consideration, and judge some delay necessary for the ripening of his plans. A philosopher, like a wizzard, conjures quickly; and calls at once all his hideous phantoms from the "vasty deep" of his depraved mind. Condorcet's hope, unlike that of many of his visionary

brethren, was lost in fruition; and he had the satisfaction to behold the government of St. Domingo administered by sable hands. To gain so useful an end, the Frenchman was careless how many houses of the whites were consumed, or how many bodies were butchered. Philosophy instructed him that all men were equal, and to exalt a few slaves to the height of their masters, it was not necessary for his system to show that infinite misery would ensue.—God forbid that I should be once thought pressing an argument against the injured Africans. I cordially wish they were all happy in their native land, and imbibing all the sweets of their tropical fruit, and their palmy wine. But when they are once incorporated with us, even upon terms unequal and oppressive, it is not a Condorcet that can make them happy, by riving the relation, in an hour; it is not his philosophy will mitigate a black man's woes, either in this life, or in the life to come.

To men of the complexion of Condorcet and his associates, most of the miseries of France may be ascribed. Full of paradox, recent from wire-drawing in the schools, and with mind all begrimed from the Cyclops' cave of metaphy-

sics, behold a Sieyes, in the form of a politician, drafting, *currente calamo*, three hundred constitutions in a day, and not one of them fit for use, but delusive as a mountebank's bill, and bloody, as the habiliments of a Banquo.

Of this dangerous, deistical, and Utopian school, a great personage, from Virginia, is a favoured pupil. His Gallic masters stroke his head, and pronounce him forward and promising. Those, who sit in the same form, cheerfully and reverently allow him to be the head of his class. In allusion to the well marshalled words of a great orator, him they worship; him they emulate; his "Notes" they con over all the time they can spare from the "Aurora" of the morning, or French politics at night. The man has talents, but they are of a dangerous and delusive kind. He has read much, and can write plausibly. He is a man of letters, and should be a retired one. His closet, and not the cabinet, is his place. In the first, he might harmlessly examine the teeth of a non-descript monster, the secretions of an African, or the almanac of Banneker. At home, he might catch a standard of weight from the droppings of his eaves; and, seated in his epicurean chair, laugh

at Moses and the prophets, and wink against the beams of the sun of righteousness. At the seat of government, his abstract, inapplicable, metaphysico politics, are either nugatory or noxious. Besides, his principles relish so strongly of Paris, and are seasoned with such a profusion of *French* garlic, that he offends the whole nation. Better for Americans, that on their extended plains "thistles should grow, instead of wheat, and cockle, instead of barley," than that a *philosopher* should influence the councils of the country, and that his admiration of the works of Voltaire and Helvetius should induce him to wish a closer connexion with Frenchmen. When a metaphysical and Gallic government obtains in America, may the pen drop from the hand, and "the arm fall from the shoulder-blade" of the Lay Preacher.

LEVITY OF THE AGE.

“Whereunto shall I liken this generation? It is like unto children.”—*Matt.* xi. 16.

I CHALLENGE the rhetoricians to find an apter similitude to express the levity of the age.

The features of humanity vary with ever varying time. Men are foxes at one season, tigers at another, and kittens, or monkeys at a third. Sometimes, intent on grave affairs, we are a starched and solemn race, and sometimes we vacantly gambol, with coral and go-cart.

The world has, by the fancy of bards, or by the austerity of monks, been compared to a wilderness, to a prison, and to a mad house. To me, its present aspect is a great nursery; the girls are busy in dressing dolls, and the boys in playing at chuck-farthing, or driving a hoop. All are frivolously employed; and, into whatever nook I cast my eyes, I see nothing but baby faces, and childish play.

The occupations, the arts, the manners, and amusements of the age, are all composed of the

lightest materials. *Vive la bagatelle* is the general motto. The world now reminds me of an old wooden cut, in the Scotch edition of my Bunyan. It is "vanity fair;" and nothing prominent to be seen, but Frenchmen, harlequins, mountebanks, and dancing dogs.

I look into the memoirs of Sully, and into the age of Louis XIV. I there read interesting narratives of an illustrious prince, magnanimous nobles, erudite clergy, and a gay people. I see arts, useful and splendid, displayed, and the artist wantoning in sunshine. I behold the great wheels of process turning, and, in every rotation, the important and the beneficial uppermost. I lay aside my books, and look at modern Paris. It is like peeping into the show box of the vagrant Savoyard. Every thing shows fantastic and puerile. Legislators with bits of motley ribbon in their caps; and compelled to wear this republican girth web, imagining themselves free. Prostitutes from the opera, personating the soberest of our faculties and chimney sweepers, not yet pure from their soot, laying their sable paws upon a constitution. Every where the tricks of scaramouch and the dialect of the gipsey. If I seek the

chiefs, I discover a monster with five heads, more whimsical than the he-goat of the prophet Daniel. If I would ask the day of the month, I hear the gibberish of *Germinal* and *Pluviose*; and courts of justice and a body of soldiers indicated by "revolutionary tribunal," and "expeditionary army."

But my eyes ache by gazing at these microscopic objects. Let us leave Paris and her great boys, to blow bladders, or to drown cats, and impale flies. We too are childish on this side of the Atlantic, though not quite so absurd, or cruel in our sports, as the French.

I am not at a loss in what class to rank an audience, who snore over the scenes of Shakspeare, and are broad awake to the mummiery of pantomime. The fine gentleman, or lady, who can exchange a dollar for a curvet of Lailson's horses, or the cup and ball necromancy of an Italian adventurer, appears to me as awkward as my nephew Bobby, now riding across my study, on a broomstick.

Of all new faces, and of every exhibition, we are childish admirers. I have known a retainer to the British theatre, who there was scarcely permitted to snuff candles without a *prompter*,

extolled by the rashness of American enthusiasm, as another Henderson or Garrick.

In literature, a childish taste prevails, and childish effusions are the vogue. We suffer our ears to be smothered, by tinkling epithets, and our understandings to be lulled by the drowsy hum of opera. I have heard of those, who have been infantine enough to go the sixth night to a tragedy, whose only merit was the republican name of its hero, and who concluded a paper was classical and patriotic, of course, because its editor was an Irishman.

The apostle acknowledged, that, in the early part of his life, he thought, spoke, and acted as a child; but when he took his degrees in the school of manhood, he laid aside folly, and her cap and bells. Though the piety of saint Paul may be inimitable, yet his dignity and resolution may be copied. The Lay Preacher hopes that he shall no longer behold a large portion of full grown fellow-creatures, sitting like children in the market place. Let us, therefore, in the quaint, but meaning phrase of our bible translators, "quit ourselves like men," and remember that we were formed for higher purposes, than to pipe, or to dance.

ON RESTLESSNESS.

“And the gold of that land is good; there is bdellium and the onyx stone.—*Gen.* xi. 12.

MEN, ever eager in search of factitious joys, go down to the sea in ships, visit various and distant climes, and tempt evil in a thousand forms, when safe and cheap delight is to be procured at home. The merchant, says Horace, hurries to the Indies, to secure a flight from poverty. A more reflecting adventurer, on the point of embarkation, might consider, that poverty is alike discoverable in the east as the west, and might be as easily eluded at home as abroad. I consider few things more baneful, than that species of discontent, which urges to go here, and go there, rather than persevere in an uniform conduct, in a permanent station. Restlessness is ever a capital defect in character, generally indicating, either a light mind, or a tainted heart. The “foul fiend,” is depicted as a wanderer; going to and fro, and walking up

and down. Cataline is described by Sallust, who saw him with a painter's eye, as ever tiring of things possessed, and panting, to reach the distant, and the inaccessible. Hope presents the false light, "gliding meteorous" before us, we follow, and are beguiled.

Then where, my dear countrymen, are you going, and why do you wander? "Oh! we are on the march to Georgia, and to Genessee, the genuine gardens of the Hesperides, exuberant in golden fruit. We are embarking for the Indies, expecting, under their hot sun, our fortunes will ripen, in a year. Do not detain us with your dogmas. It is not advice we seek, it is gold."

If that be the motive of these long journies, from Dan to Beersheba, the time, trouble, and expense may be saved. Superfluous to ascend Potosi, when mines are under our feet. The field of industry is not remote; it is a kind of homestead, within reach, and within view; and adventurers may believe, that the gold of that land is good: there is bdellium and the onyx stone.

It has been so fashionable of late, for gentlemen of Hartford, and others of a *speculative*

turn, to argue the propriety of migrating to Georgia, and to the lakes, that men look askance at domestic blessings, and fancy that neither gold, nor any thing else of value, can be found, except among southern sands, and at the foot of the falls of St. Anthony. But wealth and power are not bounded by geographical lines, nor suddenly conjured from the earth, by the instrument of a surveyor. A slower process is required, but it is sure. Labour and the plough effect more at home, than twenty journies abroad.

Suspend your schemes, ye speculators, and confide in the resources of your native soil. Refreshed by sweet and running waters, diversified by hill and valley, ventilated by buxom gales, and fertilized by the kindest influence of heaven, America, quickened by industry, is the El Dorado of romance. From such a soil, tillage will derive gold, and the gold of that land is good, where the yeoman is strenuous and persevering. Gazing at the full eared corn, the ample hay-cock, and matured orchard, the rural enthusiast may exclaim—*There is bdelium and the onyx stone, the sources of our wealth and splendour.*

ON NEWSMONGERS.

“For all the Athenians and strangers, which were there, spent their time in nothing else, but either to tell or to hear some new thing.”—*Acts* xvii. 21.

ATHENS, when visited by the apostle, was literally a barber's shop. The inhabitants, instead of examining the doctrines of the saints, asked only if they were *new*, without enquiring whether they were wholesome. Even the philosophers of the Areopagus, like the philosophers of France, were curious only of the fanciful and the strange, and left the true and the useful to the honest worshipper in the synagogue, or the humble saunterer in the market-place. “What will this babbler say?” impatiently demanded the lounging epicurean, and the captious stoic. Will he amuse us with tales of a fairy land of devotion, or will he interest us with a terrible and mysterious mythology of strange gods? Supine in the porticoes and temples of our city, we want something to ruffle

or enchain the mind. Has the apostle travelled; has he taken a turn in the hanging gardens of Babylon, or plunged into Roman baths; has he frolicked with the voluptuous Syrians, or ascertained the altitude of the pyramids of Egypt; are the beauties of Corinth familiar to his memory; and has he heard the song of Persian bards? If he can narrate wonderful adventures, even the Diogenes of our tribe shall resign half his tub to the apostle. But if the good, the perfect and the fair, are the trite themes of his lecture, we will leave him, "in the midst of Mars's hill," and inquire in the gymnasium, how the last wrestling match concluded.

But we have been in Greece long enough. Athens is no more; and recollecting an old adage, we will not insult her ashes. The busy curiosity of that city still survives; a kind of tutelary saint of every country. Though Solomon has protested against the search for novelty, men still ask "what news?" and the *quid-nunc* of Murphy's "Upholsterer," in every country, reads gazettes, lingers in coffee-houses, haunts tea tables, and demands of politicians, barbers, and women, "the strange, the passing strange."

In America, the impertinent eagerness for news should be scolded or laughed into moderation. The country gentleman, at peace on his farm, asks for translations from the *Paris Moniteur*, absurdly anxious for the welfare of Frenchmen, skipping over the carcass of their king and country. Others are solicitous for the emperor Alexander and the grand Turk, and are not a little relieved to learn, that the first traverses St. Petersburg at nine, and that the last uses more opium than sherbet. I have known profound calculators, so busy with Mr. Pitt and the bank of England, that they utterly neglected their own debts, and, proving a national bankruptcy abroad, were thoughtless of their own at home. One would suppose, that, from the general enquiries respecting European affairs, that Columbus had never discovered America; and that our interests, our hopes, and our fears, grew in the streets of Paris and London, or on the banks of the Rhine and Po.

In France, the "pleached bower," and the vines of the south, have been forsaken; and men hurry to the auberge, to enquire if the first consul has ordained a new calendar, or compiled a new constitution.

In Ireland, the giddy sons of Ulster, instead of "uniting" to sow flax, and urge the loom, have congregated tumultuously, studious of pernicious novelties. Desperate insurgents, dissatisfied with the old harp, pretended its string was too tense and its tone too bold; and wanted a new and vulgar instrument, grumbling harsh and loud.

England, proverbial for its spirit of inquisitiveness, resembles a bumpkin, absurdly curious, asking what is this, what is that? Men lift the awful veil of the church, and the curtain of the cabinet; not to venerate the ancient establishments, but to ask bishop and king, for new lawn, and a new minister. Letters, as well as politics, are subjected to the rage for novelty. Shakspeare is rejected, for flimsy farce and monstrous pantomime; for Hamlet is as old as the times of "Good Queen Bess," and the last dumb show was acted but yesterday.

Ye querists, ye quidnuncs, check your impertinent curiosity. Devote not life to hearing and telling new things. If ye have business, mind it; are you masters of families, stay at home. Your heads are too shallow to contain the myriads of novel ideas ye wish. Action, not tattle, is the business of life.

ON THANKSGIVING.

"Give a sweet savour, and a memorial of fine flour: and make a fat offering."—*Eccles. xxxviii. 2.*

YESTERDAY as I was pondering a theme for my next discourse, with an aching head, which checked invention, my hair dresser entered my chamber with the daily papers in his hand. Men of his class being naturally fond of politics, anxious for the public weal, eager to ask, and no less eager to tell the news, he therefore, after a few preliminary queries, informed me, with an Englishman's pride, that sir Sidney Smith had destroyed the gun-boats of the usurper, and that the thunder of British cannon was rocking the whole coast of France. He uttered this in a tone so cheerful, and with such sparkling eyes, that for a moment, in spite of my *rigid republicanism*, I actually participated in his pleasure. While he was occupied in chattering with the volubility of his profession, and in ~~combing~~ my gray locks, I picked up some of the papers, and as it behoved a preacher,

looked for the grave and the moral. The politician and the man of the world, will perhaps smile when I add that no articles so attached my attention, as the proclamations for days of thanksgiving in some of the northern states. When I saw from every quarter, the fairest evidences of autumnal plenty, I felt the propriety of devotional gratitude, and was delighted that public commemoration of annual favours was one of the customs of my country.

In the most rude, as well as refined ages, a lively perception of benefits conferred by supreme power, has caused mankind to "give a sweet savour, and a memorial of fine flour, and to make a fat offering." Long before christianity had shed its lustre on the nations, we find the Jew, the Roman, and the Greek, raising the periodical hymn to the skies. Though their creeds, dictated by superstitious ignorance were clashing and various, yet gratitude to the "giver" was one and the same. If a general had enlarged an empire by his enterprise, or defended paternal fields with his gallantry; if "the sweet influences of a Pleiades" had graciously descended, and Italian granaries burst with plenty, the grateful ancients decreed the festal day

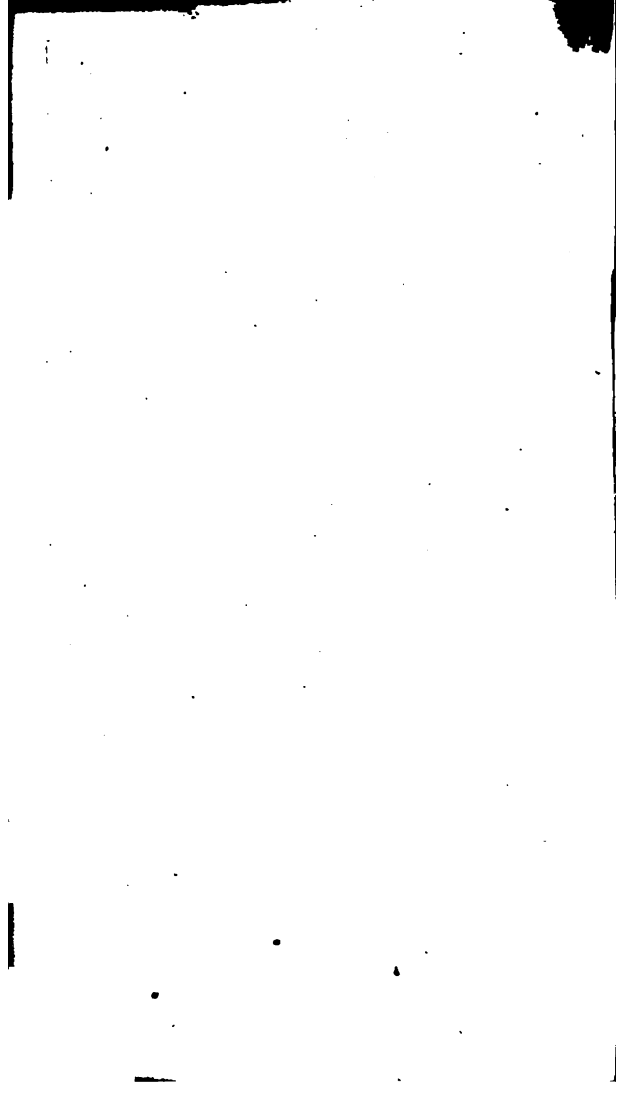
and all orders, careless of business or pleasure, thronged the temples, and thanked the beneficent power. Thanksgiving was one of the first acts of devotion, described by the sacred historian. In the very infancy of time, amid the simplicity of pastoral life, we behold a striking scene; the amiable Abel, that blameless shepherd, selecting the fairest of the flock, and sacrificing them on the first altar. From a social supper with his disciples, from crowds of penitent or plausive Jews; we find the son of Mary retiring to the solitude of Mount Olivet, to render thanks, that neither the persecuting Pharisee, nor the subtle Sadducees, had abridged his life, or invalidated his doctrine. St. Paul, in his perilous voyage, when tossing in the Adriatic gulf, and exposed to all the horrors of a nocturnal shipwreck; while he was wishing anxiously for day, did not employ the first moments of returning light in the cares of navigation, but "*gave thanks*" for his safety; and partook of bread and meat with the mariners.

But without recurring to ancient examples to fortify a duty, in which there is so much pleasure to animate its exercise, I will now close by assigning a few reasons, peculiarly binding on Americans for periodical gratitude.

While many nations of the elder world are convulsed by revolution, menaced with dangers, or groaning under servitude, we are leading "quiet and peaceable lives," and like the happy Zidonians, we dwell at once "careless and secure." No inquisitor summons our sectaries to the stake, and in no cell of America has the clank of religious chains yet been heard. No Turkish sultan abridges life by a nod, and no Lama of superstition, tortures the credulity of ignorance, or affronts the discernment of wisdom. Though discord has hurled her brand among the nations, against the conflagration of war, we have had *the whole Atlantic as a ditch*. The gleam of arms has only been contemplated in the distance; and the sound of European artillery has been as "thunder heard remote." Agonized France, under the mad dominion of petty tyrants, of the most execrable race enumerated in any of the rolls of history, has seen the lights of her church extinguished, her "nursing father" and "nursing mother" destroyed, her "nobles in fetters of iron," and her subjects ground between the upper and nether millstone, of revolutionary experiment. The olive has yielded its oil, to illumine the *lantern*, and the grape has been trod-

den by the faltering feet, of the intoxicated soldier. Silent are the halls of the sovereign, and a fox looks out of the window. Contrast this shaded picture, my countrymen, with the scenes of peace and plenty, which environ you. Commerce wafts you her wares *from afar*, and her merchandise *from the ends of the earth*. Husbandry has turned its furrow to vivifying air, and liberal harvests have been reaped from your fields; your oxen are "strong to labour," and your sheep scatter over the plains. Seeing, therefore, that you possess in tranquillity, such a goodly heritage; be careful that charity go hand in hand with cheerfulness, and as you *give thanks*, give alms. To him who has no father, stretch the parental hand, and when "the eye" of the beggar "sees, then let it bless you." When you have thanked the great giver, and imparted from your store, to him "that is ready to perish," then let the tabret sound in your feasts, then let the rejoicing heart rebound, and the voice of gladness diffuse a general complacency.







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